

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
Monday, 15th February, 2010**

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

J131. OAK TREES EXTRA CARE HOUSING - PETITION

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported that a petition had been received on 27th November, 2009, from tenants residing within the Oak Trees Extra Care Housing Scheme expressing their concern proposed removal of the Housing Support Officer.

The separation of Care and Housing Support was initiated in April, 2009 whereby the care enablers based at Potteries Court and Oak Trees were transferred to Health and Wellbeing and managed as part of the Council's registered domiciliary care service. The newly created Housing Support Team had been in operation since March, 2009 and had a presence in 2 aforementioned and Bakersfield Court.

The Team remained under the remit of Independent Living and was dedicated to providing a service to customers across the 3 schemes to ensure that their housing support related needs were met.

Since March, 2009, the Team had concentrated on making customers at Bakersfield Court feel welcome and settling them into their new home. The Team had organised and held "meet and greet" events together with several evening events. The completion of support plans with each customer had been an exercise which had been well received by all 52 customers and was now 100% complete. The Team had also started to introduce the plans to service users at Potteries and Oak Trees.

In June, 2009, a meet and greet event had been held at each one of the Extra Care Housing Schemes giving each tenant an opportunity to meet the individual team members. It was explained that the Housing Support Officers would be working flexibly across all 3 locations and would involve them rotating to become familiar with all schemes and tenants and to provide cover in periods of sickness and annual leave.

It was proposed that this method of working continues to give flexibility and that this be reiterated to tenants together with reassurance that they would not be losing an officer but would see the whole Team at different times.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and action taken to date be noted.

(2) That the positive impact of the work of the Housing Support Team be noted.

J132. NATIONAL AIR QUALITY AND M1 AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 108 of 18th February, 2008, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services presented the above update.

Section 83 of the Environment Act required a local authority, for any area where air quality standards were not being met, to issue an Order designating it an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). It was proposed that the area covered by the existing M1 AQMA be extended to include areas of Blackburn that were in proximity to the M1.

Although air quality is cleaner than at any time since the industrial revolution, air pollution was not declining as quickly as previously expected. The proposed extension of the M1 will inevitably have a negative effect upon air quality in Rotherham.

The Council's Community Protection Unit had been consulted by the Highways Agency regarding the proposal to widen the M1 motorway between junction 35 and 32 through Rotherham. The proposal was to increase highway capacity as a managed motorway to 4 lanes at peak times with no extra land taken. This would result in vehicles being closer to the residential properties of Blackburn, Meadowbank and Brinsworth. Mitigation measures could include variable speed limits. The impact on air quality was being assessed by consultants on behalf of the Highways Agency as part of their Environmental Assessment.

A Detailed Assessment of the air quality in Blackburn close to the M1, adjacent to the M1 AQMA was submitted to DEFRA in July, 2009. It was unlikely that areas of Blackburn where residents were exposed to levels of Nitrogen Dioxide above the Air Quality Objective Levels would meet the Air Quality Objectives. Consequently, the Council was statutorily obliged to declare an AQMA.

It was proposed that the AQMA should be extended to include:-

"From the boundary of the existing Air Quality Management Area which follows the line of Droppingwell Road follow Baring Road to the junction with Barber Wood Road, due north from Barber Wood Road to the line of the dismantled railway line, follow the route of the dismantled railway line to the north west to the edge of the M1 motorway. From there, follow the edge of the M1 motorway due south east to New Droppingwell Road"

It was also noted that a Detailed Assessment of Air Quality for the Parkgate area near to the A633 had been completed in April, 2009, and accepted in full by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. A Detailed Assessment for the pollutant fine particulates (24-hour PM₁₀) in the area of St. Ann's alongside the A630 was due for submission to DEFRA in April, 2010.

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Resolved:- (1) That the extension of the Rotherham M1 Air Quality Management Area (2001) be extended to include additional areas of Blackburn close to the M1 motorway.

(2) That Legal and Democratic Services amend the existing Air Quality Management Area Rotherham Borough Council Order 2001 (M1) in accordance with National Air Quality Strategy Guidance.

J133. NEIGHBOURHOODS GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO 31ST DECEMBER 2009

The Finance Manager (Neighbourhoods) submitted a report which detailed the income, expenditure and net position for the Neighbourhoods department within the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate compared to the profiled budgets for the period ending 31st December 2009.

The report also included the projected year end outturn position which currently showed a forecast overspend of £721,000 (17.%) by the end of March 2010.

The key pressures were as follows:-

- Independent Support Service (Wardens) (£617,000 overspend)
- Safer Neighbourhoods (£91,000 overspend)
- Business Regulation (£30,000 overspend)
- Neighbourhood Partnerships (£29,000 overspend)
- Housing /Access (£12,000 overspend)
- Housing Choices (£1,000 overspend)
- Neighbourhood Investments (£1,000 overspend)
- Agency and Consultancy - £36,000 incurred to date

The Finance Manager also gave a verbal report on the Key Choices Property Management Service and staffing. The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported that a review was to take place on staffing structures which would result in proposals being submitted for consideration.

Resolved:- That the report be received and noted.

J134. AREA ASSEMBLIES DEVOLVED BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods presented an update on the proposals from the Wentworth South Area Assembly Co-ordinating Group for projects identified to be funded through Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) within the 2009/10 financial year.

In 2009 the Co-ordinating Group had agreed several several projects but

which had either not been able to commence for various or had had to be reprofiled.

In order to ensure that the LABGI funding was spent within the timescales and had the desired impact on the local area, the Group had met to consider the following proposals:-

Oldfield Road/Laudsdale Road – security fencing
Praise Pod – Dalton Foljambe Primary School
Outdoor Furniture – Silverwood Children’s Home
Refurbishment of Community Centre – Dukes Place Tenants Association
Rawmarsh World War II Memorial
Remedial Tree Works
Redecoration of Kilnhurst Resource Centre
Community Garden – Thrybergh Country Park Countryside Ranger
High Greave Place Path Works
Diversionary Activities – following installation of MUGA lighting at Herringthorpe Valley Park
Community Arts Project – Bonded Warehouse, Thrybergh
Installation of Wood Posts – Shelly Drive
Wilson Avenue – removal of tree stump and tarmac area

Due to the timescales and the fact that the funding ceased in 2010, the proposals had not been through any element of public voting. The new projects would use all the underspend and ensure that all the LABGI funding for Wentworth South had been allocated.

Resolved:- (1) That the LABGI project proposals detailed above be approved.

(2) That the LABGI project proposals be submitted to the Cabinet for ratification.

J135. 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.

J136. ASSET EXCHANGE - NO. 1 CLEMENT MEWS, KIMBERWORTH

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a proposal for an asset exchange to facilitate Phase One of the Canklow Regeneration Programme.

To facilitate negotiation with private sector landlords and owners, the Neighbourhood Investment Service and Valuation Service were working closely with individual households to understand their specific needs. The

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timely relocation of residents and acquisition of properties was critical to the completion of this phase of the regeneration programme and would determine how any future redevelopment of the area would be phased and delivered.

A private landlord had requested a property exchange instead of being paid for his current vacant property. The landlord was working closely with the Council to negotiate a solution which would enable his existing tenant to be re-housed and the Council to acquire the vacated property.

A vacant Council-owned property had been identified. The property was currently void awaiting improvement. It required major internal and external works. It was proposed that the exchange take place provided that the landlord agreed to bring the property up to a good letting standard, no further tenants were allocated to his property in Canklow and any shortfall in relative capital values between the 2 properties was bridged by the landlord.

Resolved:- (1) That the asset exchange be supported.

(2) That an approach be made to other landlords in Canklow should negotiations fail with the landlord stated in the report.

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

J137. AIREY PROPERTIES - LEICESTER ROAD, DINNINGTON

Further to Minute No. 94 of 30th November, 2009, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported on the 4 Airey properties on Leicester Road, Dinnington, providing the strategic regeneration context within which future investment proposals for the properties had been considered.

The report proposed that the properties be decommissioned and demolished to support wider regeneration aims and objectives in the Leicester Road area of Dinnington particularly the delivery of new high quality homes on cleared sites.

In addition to the 4 Council-owned Airey properties, there were a further 2 remaining on Leicester Road which were in private ownership. The report also provided a rationale for the strategic acquisition and demolition of those properties to facilitate new housing development.

The report also detailed regeneration proposals for Leicester Road and outlined details of the proposed redevelopment of the cleared site and other cleared sites within the locality.

Resolved:- (1) That the proposal to disinvest in the Council-owned Airey

properties at Nos. 9, 11, 15 and 17 Leicester Road, Dinnington, be approved.

(2) That the relocation of Council tenants from Nos. 9, 11, 15 and 17 Leicester Road, Dinnington, and the demolition of said properties be approved.

(3) That the strategic acquisition of Nos. 7 and 13 Leicester Road, Dinnington, the relocation of the households and the demolition of the properties be approved.

(4) That priority rehousing status to the displaced be approved together with the payment of Homeless and Disturbance payments as appropriate.

(5) That the strategic acquisition of land in private ownership in Site C be approved subject to its affordability and finance being available within the Housing Market Renewal Programme.

(6) That a further report be submitted detailing proposals of the release of the cleared sites for redevelopment.

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

J138. PROPERTIES EXCEEDING THE INVESTMENT THRESHOLD

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the investment threshold on individual properties.

On 20th May, 2007 (Minute No. 304), the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods an investment threshold of £20,000 had been approved. The report revisited the decision having regard to recent investment decisions and following benchmarking with the other local authorities in South Yorkshire. It also detailed the number of empty homes where the required investment value exceeded the investment threshold.

Benchmarking and value for money comparisons had been undertaken and demonstrated that the investment threshold level was appropriate and very few properties exceeded the level. Those that did exceed the threshold would continue to be subject to an investment appraisal by the Neighbourhood Investment Service prior to referral to the Cabinet Member for consideration. This would ensure that investment decisions were sustainable and supported by robust evidence and analysis as well the Council responding to changing housing market and economic conditions, particularly the increasing demand for affordable Council homes.

2 properties had been referred to the Council by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. for an investment decision as the costs exceeded the existing investment threshold. Set out in the report were full details of each property together

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with the rationale for investment.

Ward Members were in support of the recommendations contained within the report.

Resolved:- (1) That the investment threshold of £20,000 be reaffirmed for the reasons stated in the report.

(2) That No. 3 Elliott Close, West Melton, be retained with the structural defects addressed to facilities re-letting subject to confirmation of resources.

(3) That No. 28 Nelson Street, Clifton, be sold due to the substantial cost of investment required.

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

J139. LAND AT STONE PARK CLOSE MALTBY

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported that the Cabinet (Minute No. 131 of 4th November, 2009, refers) approved the release of Council-owned sites to support funding bids to the Homes and Communities Agency to build new Council homes.

The outcome of funding bids was announced on 11th January, 2010 with the development proposal at Stone Park Close, Maltby, being 1 of the Rotherham bids supported by the HCA.

The report proposed the acquisition of identified land at Stone Park Close from South Yorkshire Housing Association to enable comprehensive land assembly to support the construction of 4 Council houses. Whilst not essential to the viability of the development, the additional land would provide an opportunity for enhanced design quality which would support sustainable development.

Grant funding to support the housing development had been confirmed by the HCA. Funding to support the acquisition had been identified within the approved 2009/10 Housing Investment Programme.

South Yorkshire Housing Association had agreed to the disposal of the land to the Council for this purpose.

Resolved:- That the acquisition of the land at Stone Park Close, Maltby, for the purpose stated above be approved.

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

J140. REQUEST TO WAIVER OF RIGHT TO BUY DISCOUNT REPAYMENT

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported receipt of a request from a former Council tenant asking the Council to waive the repayment of the Right to Buy discount that was repayable upon resale within a 5 year period of purchase.

The former tenant was applying for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme due to financial difficulties. The Council was in the process of applying the MRS to an appointed Registered Social Landlord. If the client had to pay back the Right to Buy discount, it would be classed as an additional charge on the property and may compromise the Mortgage Rescue proposal.

Resolved:- That, in light of the circumstances outlined in the report submitted, repayment of £9,600 be waived.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Act - information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council)/consultations relating to labour relations)