

**CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS
28th May, 2012**

Present:- Councillor McNeely (in the Chair); Councillor Goulty.

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Kaye.

J1. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Resolved:- (1) That the attendance of the Council on other Bodies be as follows:-

Rotherham Licence Watch Steering Group	Councillor Wootton (Chair of Licensing Board)
Rotherham Rent Bond Guarantee Scheme	Councillor McNeely 1 rep. from Improving Places Select Commission
Rush House Management Committee	1 rep. from Improving Places Select Commission
Social Concerns Committee Churches Together	1 rep. from Improving Places Select Commission
South Yorkshire Trading Standards Committee	Councillors McNeely and Wyatt
Environmental Protection UK Yorkshire and Humberside Division	4 reps. from Improving Places Select Commission Councillor Wyatt
Women's Refuge	1 rep. from Improving Places Select Commission
Sheffield City Region Housing and Regeneration Board	Councillor McNeely
Yorkshire and Humberside Pollution and Advisory Council	Councillor Kaye 2 reps. from Improving Places Select Commission

(2) That the Improving Places Select Commission be requested to nominate representation to those indicated above.

J2. CHANGES TO THE RIGHT TO BUY

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported on the new 'reinvigorated Right to Buy' (RTB) Scheme which had been implemented as from 3rd April, 2012.

The 2 main changes were as follows:-

- Increase to the discount cap from £24,000 to £75,000
- Treatment of RTB capital receipts

Based on the average market value and average length of tenancy in Rotherham, a tenant could expect a £12,000 increase to the discount they would be entitled to. It was anticipated this would result in a large increase in the volume of enquiries and applications and ultimately in sales. It was the Government's intention for a 'one for one' replacement by diverting a larger proportion of the capital receipt to delivering new housing but this ratio would not be achieved in Rotherham based purely on RTB receipts.

Arrangements had been made for a workshop to take place on 30th May, 2012, involving representatives from all Council Services that would be affected by an increase in RTB applications and sales. The purpose of the workshop was to explore opportunities and threats, identify short and medium term actions and establish a clear monitoring process.

Resolved:- (1) That an all Members' Seminar be held to discuss the changes in detail.

(2) That the arrangements made for the workshop on 30th May, 2012, be noted.

(3) That monthly monitoring information be provided to the Directorate Leadership Team.

(4) That further detailed financial modelling be carried out to fully understand the impact on the 30 year HRA Business Plan.

(5) That the Council's website be updated with accurate information regarding the new Scheme.

J3. NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICES UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 54 of 6th February, 2012, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported on the outcome of the consultation programme that had taken place regarding future access arrangements for Housing Services together with proposals for Service delivery.

Consultation had been undertaken from 21st February-11th May, 2012, with key stakeholders and could be summarised as follows:-

- Councillors, MPs and Area Assemblies - identified conditional support. Support was offered on the basis that customers were provided with suitable alternative Service provision and should be in place before withdrawal from Neighbourhood Offices
- Staff - reflected the decline in footfall and the desire to better utilise Housing Champions time within the neighbourhoods
- Housing Champions - keen to refocus the time spent covering Neighbourhoods Offices and tackle tenancy and estate management issues

- 68 completed customer questionnaires – majority visited a Neighbourhood Office 4 times or more within the last 6 months. The majority were aware of alternative Service access routes and would use them

The proposals were now as follows:-

Wath

- Residual Housing Services cease from July, 2012 following the installation of a customer telephone point at Wath Library. There would also be free internet access to the Council website and, subject to Cabinet approval, facilities provided to enable Housing Champions to have an operational presence at the Library

Rawmarsh

- Services had been relocated to the Customer Service Centre

Greasbrough

- Residual Housing Services cease from July, 2012, following the installation of a customer telephone point at Greasbrough Library together with free internet access

Kimberworth Park

- Residual Housing Services cease from July, 2012, following the installation of a customer telephone point at Kimberworth Park Library together with free internet access

Resolved:- (1) That the proposed redirection of Housing Services from the 4 Neighbourhood Offices and the proposals for alternative Service provision set out in the report be noted.

(2) That the opening hours of the Kimberworth Park Neighbourhood Centre be reduced to 2 x ½ days pending submission of a further report following completion of the Library facilities review.

J4. FUTURE USE OF FORMER SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM ACCOMMODATION

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported that the Rotherham North and Rotherham South Safer Neighbourhood Teams had now relocated from Hampstead Green and Holywell Place to Rotherham Central Police Station.

It was proposed the vacant units be transferred from the HRA Miscellaneous portfolio to the HRA General Housing portfolio to facilitate conversion works. The properties could then be re-let as secure housing tenancies to meet local affordable housing need.

Sufficient Capital resources to meet the costs of conversion had been identified within the current approved One Off Properties budget within the Housing Investment Programme.

The following options were submitted for consideration:-

Option 1

Transfer the properties to the General Housing portfolio and undertake conversion works to facilitate re-letting

Option 2

Retention as office accommodation

Option 3

Sale to Registered Provider and conversion to residential units

Option 4

Open market sale and conversion to a residential unit.

Option 5

Demolition

Resolved:- (1) That Option 1 be approved for the vacant units.

(2) That a Local Lettings Policy be developed for the re-letting of No. 1 Hampstead Green, Kimberworth Park.

(3) That a further report be submitted regarding the potential for a Local Letting Policy for the Wharncliffe Flats.

J5. SERVICE REVIEW COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported on the Service Review that had been undertaken within the Community Safety Unit against the Policy and Performance context of the Service and recognised both the statutory need to enable the Council's effective management of the Safer Rotherham Partnership, Rotherham's Community Safety Partnership and the discretionary elements relating to the co-ordination and support of the priorities of the SRP and partner agencies.

The proposed new operating model was capable of:-

- Management of the Safer Rotherham Partnership and assuring delivery of statutory functions required of Community Safety Partnerships
- Reducing administrative bureaucracy and addressing the "meetings" culture
- Providing a focus for partnership direction with regard to anti-social behaviour
- Becoming a critical advisory element of integrated locality based services
- Deliver Corporate Priorities
- Maintaining front line services and protecting the most vulnerable
- Effectively managing and addressing anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood crime
- Embracing the introduction of and forming positive links with Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panels.

The Service would be redesigned to include 1 SRP/ASB Unit Manager (Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Manager), 4 ASB Officers and 2.2 Community Safety/SRB Administrators. The ASB function was also supported by a full-time seconded Police Officer.

The proposals would be supported by the increased capacity of Housing Champions to deal proactively as well as reactively to neighbourhood issues, directing more resources to front line service delivery and providing essential assurances to communities through increased visibility and presence within the neighbourhoods.

The Safer Neighbourhood Teams would continue to provide a focus for co-ordination of service activity on the ground between partners and the community.

A Service Improvement Plan had also been developed to further improve and strengthen the anti-social behaviour management functions within the Council.

Resolved:- (1) That the staffing implications arising from the proposals and the timescale for implementation be noted.

(2) That the structural changes set out in the report submitted be noted.

(3) That a further report be submitted following 6 months' implementation of the new structure.

J6. HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2012/13 - 2014/15: GARAGE SITES, ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS, NON-TRADITIONAL HOUSING, COMMUNITY CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS (5 YEAR PROGRAMME) AND ONE-OFF PROPERTY INVESTMENT

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services presented the proposed Three Year Housing Investment Programme for 2012/13 to 2014/15 detailing how the Programme had been compiled and identified how various individual schemes of work included within the Programme had been drawn up.

The report focussed on the first year of the 3 year period as subsequent years' planned works would be reviewed on an annual basis. Anticipated spend was:-

Garage Site Investment	£200,000
Environmental Works	£500,000
Non-Traditional Housing Investment	£1.289M
Community Centre Improvements (5 Year Programme)	£250,000

The current investment threshold per property was £20,000 and had been in place for several years. Increasing the threshold to £45,000 would allow for decent homes, external and structural works to be carried out to miscellaneous properties.

Resolved:- (1) That the approach to identifying and initiating investment works described in the report be approved.

(2) That the one-off property investment threshold delegated to the Director of

Housing and Neighbourhood Services be increased from £20,000 to £45,000.

(3) That one-off properties requiring major works in excess of £45,000 be subject to the approval of the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods.

J7. 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (.information likely to reveal the identity of an imdividual).

J8. INTRODUCTORY TENANCY REVIEW PANEL

It was noted that an Appeals Panel had been held on 12th April (adjourned) and 16th May, 2011 (reconvened), comprising Councillors Atkin (in the Chair), Dodson and Ellis to review a decision to terminate an Introductory Tenancy.

The Panel had confirmed the decision made on 16th March, 2012.

Resolved:- That the Panel's decision be noted.

[Exempt under Paragraph 2 of the Act - information likely to reveal the identity of an individual