

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS**

**Venue: Town Hall,  
Moorgate Street,  
Rotherham. S60 2TH**

**Date: Monday, 28th May, 2012**

**Time: 10.00 a.m.**

### **A G E N D A**

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended March 2006).
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Representation on Outside Bodies (Pages 1 - 3)
4. Changes to the Right to Buy (Pages 4 - 11)
5. Neighbourhood Offices Update (Pages 12 - 18)
6. Future Use of Former Safer Neighbourhood Team Accommodation (Pages 19 - 27)
7. Service Review Community Safety Unit (Pages 28 - 34)
8. 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 (Pages 35 - 44)

#### **(The Chair authorised consideration of the following item**

9. 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.
10. Introductory Tenancy Review Panel (Pages 45 - 53)  
(Exempt under Paragraph 2 of the Act – information likely to reveal the identity of an individual)

## Representation of the Council on Other Bodies 2012– 2013

Title	Description	Council Rep.	Frequency	Councillors Role	RMBC Officer Support	How issues are reported back into the Council
Rotherham Licence Watch Steering Group	Licencees throughout the borough working together to address safety issues relating to drinking i.e. laws, anti social behaviour, litter, safety	Chair of Licensing Board	Monthly	Representative	Deborah Bragg	Group is currently co-ordinated by the Rotherham Chamber of Commerce.
Rotherham Bond Guarantee Scheme	Bond Guarantee Scheme, recent re-organisation taken place undertaken in respect of attendance and support by Officers	Councillor McNeely  Sub – rep from Improving Places Select Commission	Bi-monthly	Representative	James Greenhedge	Quarterly performance reports  Annual funding report to Cabinet Member
RUSH House Management Committee	Providing the strategic direction and the overall decision making body for the accommodation and support service for homeless people aged 16 to 23	Rep from Improving Places Select Commission	Bi-monthly	Co-opt member To read papers, receive minutes and report back.	Sandra Tolley	Elected Member to report to Cabinet Member annually
Social Concerns Committee Churches Together		Rep. from the Improving Places Select Commission		-	-	Churches Together do feed issues through Robond
South Yorkshire Trading Standards Committee	Originally set up to co-ordinate the work of Trading Standards across South Yorkshire. Terms of this group have	Councillors McNeely and <b>Jack</b>	6 monthly meetings	Representative	Serviced by Sheffield City Council	Elected Member to report to Cabinet Member annually

Title	Description	Council Rep.	Frequency	Councillors Role	RMBC Officer Support	How issues are reported back into the Council
	<p>now expired. Has become a liaison group for Trading Standard activity. Organisation now under re-evaluation.</p>					
Environmental Protection UK Yorkshire and Humberside Division	The work of the Division is carried out voluntarily by members who want to make an impact upon creating sustainable environments for future generations.	4 reps. from the Improving Places Select Commission	1 event and 3 meetings per year	Representative and information sharing	Mark Ford	Information shared between Officers including consideration of national policy
Women's Refuge	Refuge Management Committee, addresses all management, strategy, policy and operational matters of the Women's Refuge	1 Rep. from Improving Places Select Commission	Monthly	Representative	Sandra Tolley	<p>Monthly management minutes</p> <p>Elected member to report back annually</p>
Sheffield City Region Housing and Regeneration Board	Elected Member for South Yorkshire – Housing issues on a regional level	Councillor McNeely	Quarterly	Sub regional political representative for South Yorkshire - consider all housing related interventions and investments	Dave Richmond	Report through Cabinet

Title	Description	Council Rep.	Frequency	Councillors Role	RMBC Officer Support	How issues are reported back into the Council
Yorkshire and Humberside Pollution and Advisory Council	To consider all matters relating to environmental pollution and control.	Councillor Kaye plus 2 reps. from Improving Places Select Commission	Annual Meeting	Representative	Mark Ford	Report to Improving Places Select Commission

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>28th May 2012</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Changes to the Right to Buy</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods and Adult Services</b>

## 5. Summary

Government published the details of the 'reinvigorated Right to Buy' (RTB) on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and the new scheme was implemented from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012. The two main changes are the increase to the discount cap from £24k to £75k, and the treatment of RTB capital receipts. Based on the average market value and average length of tenancy in Rotherham, a tenant can expect a £12k increase to the discount they would be entitled to under the RTB. We anticipate a large increase in the volume of queries and applications, and an increase in RTB sales. The Government intends 'one for one' replacement by diverting a larger proportion of the capital receipt to delivering new housing, but this ratio will not be achieved in Rotherham based purely on RTB receipts.

This report sets out the implications for tenants and for RMBC in more detail.

## 6. Recommendations

**that Cabinet Member is asked to:**

- Agree that a Members' seminar should be held to discuss the changes in detail.
- Note that a workshop has been arranged for 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012 involving representatives from all RMBC services that will be affected by an increase in RTB applications and sales, to explore opportunities and threats, identify short and medium term actions and establish a clear monitoring process.
- Note that monthly monitoring information will be provided to Directorate Leadership Team.
- Note that further detailed financial modeling will be carried out, to enable us to understand the impact on the 30 year HRA business plan.
- Note that RMBC's website will be updated with accurate information about the new scheme.

## 7. Proposals and details

### 7.1 Introduction

CLG published the details of the reinvigorated Right to Buy (RTB) scheme on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and the changes went live on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012. The two main changes are that the discount cap has been increased from £24k to £75k, and the way the capital receipts from sales are to be treated has changed, to support the delivery of new affordable housing.

### 7.2 £75k discount cap – what does this mean for tenants?

The formula for calculating discount RTB discount remains unchanged. Secure tenants of at least five years can apply to buy their Council house for a discount of 35% of the property's value plus 1% for each year beyond the qualifying period (five years) up to a maximum of 60%. (For flats: 50% plus 2% for each year beyond the qualifying period up to a maximum of 70%).

The average RTB house price in Rotherham is £80k, and the average length of a tenancy is 15 years. The following table sets out three scenarios to show the minimum, average and maximum impacts the new rules could have on discounts:

	Example to show min. impact	Example to show ave. impact	Example to show max. impact
Property value	£60,000	£80,000	£130,000
Length of tenancy	5 years	15 years	30+ years
% Discount	35%	45%	60%
Previous discount	£21,000	£24,000 (due to cap)	£24,000 (due to cap)
New discount	£21,000	£36,000	£75,000 (due to cap)
Increase in discount	0	£12,000	£51,000

It is useful to compare the costs to the tenant of owning as opposed to renting. A mortgage for £43,690 on 20 years at 3.5% would cost £312 per month in the first year (including a constant principal repayment of £188 per month – NB interest only would be much cheaper). This equates to approximately £74 per week, which is less than the current average rent for a two bedroom Council property (£77.51). The average rent for a three bedroom Council property is £92 per week. This is dependent however on a number of factors, including the ability to secure a mortgage for a long enough period (say 20 years, before or on 60<sup>th</sup> / 65<sup>th</sup> birthday), and the certainty of low interest rate for the first ten years.

### 7.3 Will this result in more RTB sales?

This is likely, but difficult to predict with any degree of accuracy. The RTB has been popular in Rotherham, with over 17,000 Council properties sold via this route since its introduction in 1980. Numbers have tailed off dramatically in recent years, from 972 in 2004/5, down to less than 25 units per year since 2008/09. Such low figures can be explained as follows:

- Low income (67% of Council tenants are in receipt of housing benefit) therefore people less able to access mortgages
- People not wanting to remain in their current property in the longer term
- People happy to continue to rent
- Difficulties in securing a mortgage and levels of deposits required
- Reluctance to commit to owner occupation in uncertain economic times
- Strict capping of RTB discount discouraged tenants to switch to homeownership

The increased discount may persuade those who would otherwise consider home ownership to be unaffordable to them, to enquire about RTB. While on the one hand the economic recession means that fewer people are in a position to save a deposit / access a mortgage, the low interest rates and recent rent increases may encourage people to respond to the 'reinvigorated' RTB offer. We anticipate that the groups that are more likely to respond are:

- 33% of tenants (c6900) who pay their full rent (although it should not be assumed that home ownership is unaffordable for people on benefits if the current interest rates are maintained and when the mortgage value is less than say £40k).
- Elderly tenants, who are entitled to the maximum 60% discount, whose relatives may wish to take advantage of the offer on their behalf.
- People who live in the highest value areas i.e. Whiston, Broom, Wentworth and other rural areas, where the discount increase is most dramatic.
- Companies and individuals who exploit the discount rules by offering cash incentives to council tenants on resale of their homes. The five year qualifying period may no longer be sufficient to deter these transactions.

We expect to see a rise in enquiries and applications. A proportion of these will result in sales, but we cannot predict the volume, therefore rigorous monthly monitoring is essential.

### **7.4 What does this mean for capital receipts?**

Changes have been made to the way RTB receipts are treated, in order to allow more affordable housing to be built to replace the properties lost through RTB.

#### Previous treatment of income from RTB sales

Example to illustrate calculation:

- Gross capital receipt from a RTB sale: £60,000
- Less administrative costs: £1,000
- Less cost of improvements to property during preceding three years: £10,000
- Net receipt: £49,000
- 75% of which to Government: £36,750
- 25% of which to be retained by RMBC as 'residual receipt': £12,250

In practical terms RMBC has used this 25% share to fund private sector Disabled Facilities Grant improvements.

In preparing for RMBC's HRA self-financing settlement a number of assumptions were made in the business plan, including:

- 23 RTB sales per annum (based on recent experience)
- Based on the previous system, this would have yielded income to Government of £931,500 per annum and £310,500 per annum to RMBC. These figures have been kept as 'assumed income' targets under the new system, see below.

New system

The Government's intention is that once these income targets have been met each year (i.e. £931,500 to Government and £310,500 to RMBC), any additional receipts should be spent on new affordable homes to replace the additional units lost through the RTB.

Until the targets are met each year, the treatment of RTB sales is largely the same as before, with the following amendments:

- No deduction of cost of improvements during previous 3 year period (it is assumed that this will not be too problematic as Decent Homes ended in 2010)
- For all the properties over and above the assumed number of RTB sales, i.e. 23, we are permitted to deduct a figure that represents the amount of HRA debt attached to each property
- Provision to be made for 'buy-backs' of 6.5%

Taking the above into account, once a sufficient number of properties has been sold to reach the assumed income targets (£931,500 and £310,500), the receipts are treated as follows:

Gross capital receipt from a RTB sale after new discount applied	£43,690
Less administrative costs	-£1,300
Less cost of average debt in HRA settlement per property	-£15,735
Less buy-back provision	-£1733
Net receipt to be spent on re-provision of affordable homes	c£24,922

In summary, until we have reached the assumed income targets, the treatment of capital receipts will be largely the same as before (75% / 25% split) and there will be no additional resources to fund new affordable homes. The number of homes sold before the new treatment is triggered is predicted to be 34, due to the increased discounts. Once this has been reached, i.e. in simple terms from the 35<sup>th</sup> property sold onwards, the residual receipt to invest in new homes will be in the region of **£25k per property**.

**7.5 Will we be able to deliver more affordable homes?**

The Government's intention is that the new RTB will see 'no reduction in the number of affordable homes, with any additional homes bought under the scheme leading directly to the provision of new affordable homes for rent'. Detailed modeling has been carried out and the 1:1 replacement target will not be achieved in Rotherham based purely on RTB receipts.

It is assumed that a new build property would cost £114,700 (based on a three bed house at SY Design standard meeting Code Level 4 Sustainable Homes and a number of other



assumptions). Government states that no more than 30% of the cost is to be funded by the RTB receipt, explained as follows:

*“Drawing on evidence from the 2011-2015 Affordable Homes Programme – for which most agreements have now been signed - we are clear that that it should be possible to fund new homes let at Affordable Rent levels, with no more than 30% of the cost of the new homes needing to come from the Right to Buy receipt. As in the Affordable Homes Programme, the remainder of the cost will come from borrowing against the net rental income stream from the new property, and cross-subsidy from the landlord’s own resources, including (in some cases) land.*

*As we set out in our consultation paper, our aim is to deliver one-for-one replacement nationally. We recognise that the remaining receipt will not be large enough to fund one-for-one replacement in some areas, and we are not requiring councils to do so. If a council wishes to retain the remaining receipt, all it must do is spend that receipt on new affordable rented homes, making sure that no more than 30% of the cost of the new homes comes from the Right to Buy receipt. It can provide the new homes itself, or contract with another social housing provider”.*

30% of the cost is £34,410 and we therefore take this to be the assumed cost of a replacement home.

As shown in section 7.4, for the first 34 homes sold each year there will be no additional resources for new affordable housing. Once the new rules are ‘triggered’ we can expect to receive in the region of £25,000 per property to spend on new housing, which is approaching the £34,410 required to fund 30% of total new build cost (‘one for one’ provision). However, the first 34 homes lost each year are not replaced. We had previously not assumed replacement of the 23 homes we expected to sell, therefore we could argue this is an additional loss of 11 homes (34 minus 23) per annum.

In summary, based on RTB receipts, we will be able to deliver new affordable homes if we sell more than 34 units per year, but not enough to replace the number sold, over and above the level we expected, due to the increased discounts. However, in order to deliver the replacement we would need to borrow an estimated £91k per property.

Conversely, if we sell *less* than 34 properties, the assumed income targets to Government and RMBC will not be met and the implications of this are currently being explored.

We are in the process of developing a local authority new housing programme, which will identify additional sources of finance to deliver new Council housing and replace the stock lost through increased RTB sales.

### Two final points:

The amount of HRA-owned land on which we could build Council new build homes is also limited, and a detailed local authority new housing strategy will be required to address these issues and ensure all available routes to delivering new affordable housing are explored.

All LANB homes (built since 2008) will be excluded from the revised RTB scheme under the ‘cost floor’ rule for 15 years. (The cost floor means that properties could not be sold for less than they cost to build). Government acknowledges that “without these changes, we

recognise there could be a financial disincentive for local authorities to provide new affordable rented homes in future”.

## 7.6 Implications for the HRA business plan

The impact of the new RTB scheme in the first year of the 30 year HRA business plan is summarised as follows:

Impact on the business (in 1 Year)	Number of sales			
	50	100	500	1,000
Loss of Income in the first year (£)	88,128	251,328	1,556,928	3,188,928
Less costs incurred per year per property (£)	-60,318	-172,018	-1,065,618	-2,182,618
Loss of Annual Surplus (£)	27,810	79,310	491,310	1,006,310

Further modelling will need to be carried out to show the detailed implications.

## 7.7 Providing information to tenants about the Right to Buy

We are in the process of developing a new information sheet for tenants to be accessible via the Council’s website, and to be provided to all applicants. This will reflect the position in Rotherham and will contain useful information about costs and affordability.

## 8. Finance

- The changes to the treatment of capital receipts and implications for building new homes are set out in 7.4 and 7.5.
- Implications for the HRA business plan have been briefly summarised in 7.6 and further detailed modelling will need to be carried out. The impact on the HRA business plan will vary enormously depending on the number of RTB sales and this will need to be monitored on a regular basis.
- An additional point to note is the potential increase in staffing resources that will be required if there is a large volume of calls and applications. Initially this can be managed within the Contact Centre but a meeting will be needed to consider other areas such as valuation and legal services.

## 9. Risks and uncertainties

The list below is not exhaustive and a workshop will be held with all affected services to explore the risks and opportunities in more detail.

Risk / uncertainty	Suggested action
We do not know how many additional RTB sales to expect. The impact on the HRA business plan will vary enormously depending on the number of RTBs, as will the pressure on existing resources.	The increase in the volume of queries and applications should be monitored from April 2012 onwards to allow us to make projections and the staffing resources required should be reviewed on an ongoing basis.
There is a risk that RMBC would not meet its	It is recommended that we upload

Risk / uncertainty	Suggested action
legal duty to advise tenants of their extended RTB rights, if we do not communicate the new scheme.	information on the RMBC website and provide staff with a clear briefing and updated scripts. Debt management advice will be provided to tenants to inform on the financial risks that homeownership entails for people on low income (mortgage repayment, maintenance and repairs).
We may not be able to replace the number of units sold, resulting in a loss of Council stock, and income through rents received, at a time when the need and ambition for more new Council housing is higher than ever.	Review local authority new housing strategy to ensure every opportunity is explored to deliver new Council build and enable other affordable housing delivery in the borough.
Existing problems with the RTB process will be magnified if the volume increases, for example recovery of service charges.	Meeting with all services involved to identify lessons and improve the end to end process (arranged for 30 <sup>th</sup> May 2012).
People may exercise their RTB in response to the increased discount, and find themselves in unaffordable home ownership.	Ensure clear information is provided and detailed affordability assessments carried out. Debt management advice will be provided to tenants to inform on the financial risks that homeownership entails for people on low income (mortgage repayment, maintenance and repairs).
In Rotherham, RTB receipts have been used to top up the Disabled Facilities Grant, and if we divert new receipts for replacement homes there will be an impact on private sector aids and adaptations.	The increase in the volume of queries and applications should be monitored from April 2012 onwards to allow us to make projections and quantify this impact.
There is a risk of unscrupulous landlords and mortgage companies taking advantage of the increased discount by targeting council tenants and persuading them to take up the Right to Buy, when they are not in a position to afford this. The Government does not intend to make any legislative changes to the Right to Buy to require financial checks or limit purchase with family members although plans to 'keep the potential for any abuses under continual review'.	This will be addressed by including additional information sheets in the advisory information issued to RTB applicants.
It is possible that older residents with long tenancies (50+ years in many cases) may submit the RTB, to take advantage of the	This will be addressed by including additional information sheets in the advisory information issued to RTB

Risk / uncertainty	Suggested action
<p>enhanced discount, for the benefit of their children. This could lead to an increase in the following scenario, which we understand already occurs, albeit anecdotally.</p> <p>-A long standing tenant exercises their RTB, the tenant is retired and has no income so although the deeds for the property appear in the tenant's name (as RTB rules dictate) the property's mortgage is in the name of, and paid by, a younger relative.</p> <p>-The elderly tenant's health deteriorates and they need substantial care.</p> <p>-When the elderly tenants dies the state seeks to recoup care costs from the estate which can cause issues with the relative who has paid the mortgage.</p>	<p>applicants.</p>

Finally, Legal Services have advised that the new legislation states that any currently active application (including any applications with legal for completion) needs to take into account the changes in discount amounts. To this effect it is necessary for Legal to re-issue S125 valuation letters to all active applications where we have already sent letters out. It is estimated that there are approximately 25 valid applications. This may result in increased discount for these applicants and therefore reduced capital receipts to RMBC.

## 10. Background papers and consultation

- Previous reports to DLT and Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (27<sup>th</sup> January 2012) presenting RMBC's response to Government consultation
- Reinvigorating the Right to Buy and One for One Replacement – CLG website
- Marketing posters, leaflets and letter templates provided by CLG in April 2012

Consultation: RotherFed were consulted on RMBC's response to the original consultation. Corporate Finance have been engaged in the production of this report.

## 11. Contact details

- Jane Davies-Haire, Housing Reform Co-ordinator, 01709 334970
- Wendy Foster, Social Housing Officer, 01709 255047
- Joel Gouget, Principal Finance Officer, 01709 334953

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:-</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Safe &amp; Attractive Neighbourhoods</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:-</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> May 2012</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:-</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Offices Update</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:-</b>	<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD &amp; ADULT SERVICES</b>

### **5. Summary**

On 6<sup>th</sup> February 2012, Minute No:54 refers, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the future of Neighbourhood Offices, following the withdrawal of cashiering services at Wath, Rawmarsh, Greasbrough and Kimberworth Park. It was resolved that consultation take place regarding future access arrangements for Housing Services and that a further report be submitted on the outcome of the consultation programme together with proposals for service delivery.

This report provides details on the outcome of the consultation programme and recommendations for the future of the remaining neighbourhood offices and service delivery arrangements.

### **6. Recommendations**

**That the Cabinet Member,**

- **Notes the proposed redirection of housing services from the four neighbourhood offices and the proposals for alternative service provision detailed in the report.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### 7.1 Background

Following the withdrawal of cashiering services in August 2011, Wath, Rawmarsh, Greasbrough and Kimberworth Park neighbourhood offices have remained open from 8.45am to 4.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and from 9am to 6pm on Wednesdays. However, an analysis of the footfall figures of the Neighbourhood Offices (detailed below) has demonstrated that very few customers are visiting the offices, with the majority increasingly using other routes to access services.

In July 2011, the following visits were made by customers to neighbourhood offices:

- Wath 74
- Rawmarsh 159
- Greasbrough 73
- Kimberworth Park Not recorded but generally not as busy as Greasbrough

Since that time there have been a decreasing number of visitors accessing our services at the neighbourhood offices, as detailed below:

	September 2011	December 2011
• Wath	32	1
• Rawmarsh	47	11
• Greasbrough	114	36
• Kimberworth	26	7

The customer access points in the 4 neighbourhood offices are currently being staffed by Housing Champions who, as a result, are unable to spend time on estates, identifying and dealing with housing and estate management issues and supporting customers.

A report on the future of the neighbourhood offices was presented to Cabinet Member on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2012 (Minute No:54), advising that service access at neighbourhood offices by customers had considerably reduced and alternatives were widely available. It was resolved that consultation take place regarding future access arrangements for housing services, with a further report to be submitted on the outcome of the consultation programme.

### 7.2 Consultation

A 12 week consultation exercise was undertaken, commencing on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012 and concluding on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

The objectives of the consultation exercise were:-

- To identify preferred access routes for housing services
- To gather opinion on alternative routes for service provision

Consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders and included:-

- Ward Members

- Area Assemblies
- MP's
- Area Housing Panels
- Housing Champions & Housing and Neighbourhood Co-ordinators
- Residents

A variety of consultation methods were used, these included:-

- Customer questionnaires distributed at the neighbourhood offices, the Rotherfed AGM, Area Housing Panel Chairs Meeting and posted on the RMBC website.
- Officer attendance and discussion at Area Assembly Co-ordinating Groups covering Rawmarsh/Wath/Kimberworth Park and Greasbrough.
- Letters sent to Elected Members and MP's
- Staff consultation with Housing Champions/Managers

The results of the consultation exercise can be summarised as follows:-

Consultation with Councillors, MP's and Area Assemblies identified conditional support for the withdrawal of housing services from the 4 neighbourhood offices. Support was offered on the basis that customers were provided with suitable alternative service provision (in particular customer access telephone points) and that the alternative service provision should be in place and operational before the services were withdrawn from the neighbourhood offices. Concerns were raised that the elderly and vulnerable may find any changes difficult therefore particular consideration should be made when considering appropriate provision for this client group.

Staff consultation reflected the decline in footfall at the 4 neighbourhood offices and the desire to better utilise Housing Champions time within the neighbourhoods. Housing Champions were particularly keen to refocus the time spent covering neighbourhood offices on tackling tenancy and estate management issues and supporting customers by spending more time on the estates.

The majority of questionnaires were completed by people who use the service at Neighbourhood Offices. In total, 68 customer questionnaires were received, it should be noted however that these reflect a very small proportion of tenants.

An analysis of the questionnaires showed that:-

- 83.8% (57) respondents said they had visited a neighbourhood office in the last 6 months. Of those 57, Greasbrough was significantly the most popular neighbourhood office with 84.2%, Rawmarsh had 14%, Kimberworth Park 7.8% and Wath 1.8%.
- When asked how often they had visited neighbourhood offices, 78.6% of respondents had visited 4 times or more.
- Respondents were asked for their reasons for visiting the neighbourhood offices. The main reasons identified were; to speak to a Housing Champion (70.9%), to report a repair (58.2%), to use a telephone (36.4%) and to report estate management issues (23.6%).

- Almost 70% of respondents were aware of the alternative ways in which housing services could be accessed. When asked what other service routes they have used/would consider using, 60% said Housing Champion home visits by appointment. Other service routes mentioned were a dedicated housing repairs number (44%), a dedicated number to make other housing enquiries (26%) and facilities at the Customer Service Centres (24%).
- When asked what effect the withdrawal of service provision from the neighbourhood offices would have, 53% said it would have a moderate impact and 19.7% said it would have a serious impact. Of the 48 respondents who said it would have a moderate or serious impact, 7 stated they hadn't visited a neighbourhood office in the last 6 months and another 4 had only visited once or twice. Of the 44 respondents who had visited the Neighbourhood Offices 4 or more times over the past 6 months, over 25% said that it would have only a minor impact or no impact at all.
- The main reasons respondents felt that the redirection of services would have an impact were: issues accessing the customer contact centre, reducing the choice of service access available, their work patterns and not having a home telephone.

In summary, of those customers who responded to the questionnaire, the majority stated they had visited a neighbourhood office 4 times or more within the last six months, regarding tenancy and estate management issues. The most accessed office being the Greasbrough office. The majority of customers were aware of alternative service access routes and would use them but for various reasons chose to visit the office in person. Of those who visited the offices most frequently, the majority felt that a redirection of services from the offices would have an impact upon them.

### **7.3 Proposals for future service delivery**

#### **7.3.1 Key considerations**

In considering the proposals set out below, regard has been had to the outcomes of the consultation and the analysis of customer footfall into the offices. In particular:-

- The vast majority of our customers are no longer accessing housing services through neighbourhood offices and footfall continues to be extremely poor. The footfall figures detailed above represent an extremely small number of customers compared to the overall number of tenancies and potential customers within those localities.
- Since the withdrawal of cashiering services in 2011, customers have adopted alternative payment routes available.
- Maintaining an operational presence at neighbourhood offices, 5 days per week, is reliant upon two housing champions being in attendance, which restricts their ability to address issues directly within the neighbourhoods. This is not an efficient use of resources and the costs of maintaining this service provision for a very small number of customers is high.

There is an opportunity cost in staffing neighbourhood offices with Housing Champions. Over a working week, based upon two staff at the four neighbourhood



offices, opening for the hours stated above, 320 hours of officer time per week are expended staffing neighbourhood offices. This time could be better spent on direct customer contact within the neighbourhoods, managing the extensive caseload of estate and tenancy management and anti-social behaviour issues being reported. There are currently 697 cases requiring resolution and closure. In addition, creating time and resource to also proactively pursue estate and tenancy issues and ASB within the neighbourhoods.

There is also a financial cost to maintaining current neighbourhood office arrangements. Maintaining operational facilities in these localities results in revenue costs to the service, for building maintenance and security, utility and office servicing costs etc. This expenditure could potentially be redirected into enhancing service delivery through other routes.

- Consultation with elected members and area assemblies has demonstrated a willingness to support the redirection of services from the offices, provided alternative suitable provision can be made available in advance.
- The majority of customers who access services at the neighbourhood offices are aware of alternative service access routes and would consider using them.

### **7.3.2 Proposed service delivery arrangements**

Currently, in addition to residual service access arrangements at neighbourhood offices, the following alternative service access routes are available for general enquiries, tenancy and estate related issues:-

- Cash payments can be made at various Paypoint locations. Since the withdrawal of payment facilities at neighbourhood offices, customers have accessed a range of alternative payment methods, including Paypoint, direct debit payment, payment in person at Customer Service Centres etc.
- Estate Management Issues can be reported on the new Rotherham Housing Golden Number 01709 336 040 (office hours Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm)
- General and emergency repairs can be reported on Connect 01709 336 009 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Free Internet access is available at local libraries. This includes libraries at Wath, Greasbrough, Kimberworth Park and Rawmarsh (based at the new CSC)
- View and bid for properties using Key Choices website or visiting the Property Shop
- Appointments can be made for Housing Champions to visit customers in their own homes or another location if required.
- Housing surgeries are held by Housing Champions periodically in locations around the neighbourhoods, where locally requested and tailored to meet the specific needs of our customers and neighbourhoods. The provision of surgeries would be reviewed periodically to inform ongoing service delivery arrangements.
- Face to face customer services are available centrally at Riverside House; in the north at Swinton CSC and Rawmarsh CSC and in the south of the borough at Dinnington, Maltby CSC and Aston CSC.
- Customer access arrangements are continuously reviewed to ensure customers receive the most suitable and optimum service provision. A review of the Housing Customer Contact Centre arrangements and performance is currently ongoing.

It is therefore proposed that housing services are redirected from the 4 neighbourhood offices, with customer service access being through the alternative service provision detailed above. To support customer access in addition to the alternative service access routes currently available, as detailed above

### **7.3.3 Wath**

It is proposed that the residual housing services delivered from the Wath neighbourhood office cease from July 2012, following the installation of a customer telephone point at Wath library. In addition, the library will also offer:-

- Free internet access to Council website.
- Subject to Cabinet approval, Wath Library will be upgraded to accommodate 18 'hot desks' and interview rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. This will enable Housing Champions to have an operational presence at Wath Library, with access to customer interview facilities as required. The proposed timescale for this development is December 2012.

### **7.3.2 Rawmarsh**

The future of the Rawmarsh Neighbourhood Office based services was considered as part of the planning process for the new Rawmarsh Customer Service Centre. Services relocated from the neighbourhood office on Rawmarsh Hill to the new Rawmarsh Customer Service Centre when it opened on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012, together with the neighbouring Rawmarsh library. The Rawmarsh CSC service provision includes:-

- A Housing specific Customer Service Assistant to deal with general enquiries.
- An operational base for the Housing Champions, with access to customer interview rooms.

### **7.3.3 Greasbrough**

It is proposed that the residual housing services delivered from the Greasbrough neighbourhood office cease from July 2012, following the installation of a customer telephone point at Greasbrough library. In addition, the library will also offer free internet access.

### **7.3.4 Kimberworth Park**

It is proposed that the residual housing services delivered from the Kimberworth Park neighbourhood office cease from July 2012, following the installation of a customer telephone point at Kimberworth Park library. In addition, the library will also offer free internet access.

Subject to approval, customer information would be made available locally and on the Council website in a timely manner to advise of the proposed changes to service delivery and the new arrangements.

## **8. Finance**

There is a financial cost to maintaining current neighbourhood office arrangements. Maintaining operational facilities in these localities results in revenue costs to the Council, for building maintenance and security, utility and office servicing costs etc. This

expenditure would be significantly reduced, with some residual management and maintenance costs continuing until alternative uses were identified for the premises.

The installation of a VoIP telephone is approximately £300-400 this includes;

- Requirements capture
- Solution build
- Handset
- Licence
- ICT Labour

This is only an indicative cost and the actual price will be subject to a site survey.

The costs of the installation of customer access telephone points will be met from the Corporate change management programme, as part of the roll out of the VoIP system. This has been confirmed by Change Management Section, Resources Directorate and Head of Corporate IT. We are advised that the ongoing corporate programme for the roll out of VoIP will absorb the costs for implementing customer access telephony at libraries as proposed.

### **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The main risk relates to the lack of support for the proposals to redirect housing services from Neighbourhood Offices. This would impact on the Housing Champions ability to fulfil their main duties resulting in a diminished service within the community.

We will need to ensure telephony access requirements are factored into surveys and requirements gathering exercises for the VoIP roll out.

A review of the library facilities in Rotherham is planned for September 2012, it is anticipated that both Wath Library and Greasbrough Library will be unaffected. There is a possibility however, that Kimberworth Park library may be affected by the review.

### **10. Background Papers and Consultation**

Neighbourhood Offices Cabinet Report - 6<sup>th</sup> February 2012, Minute No:54  
Consultation responses are held on file by the Housing & Communities Service.

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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO DLT</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Cabinet Member Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>28 May 2012</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Future use of Former Safer Neighbourhood Team Accommodation at 1 Hampstead Green, Kimberworth Park and 1 and 2 Holywell Place, St Anns</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Resources Neighbourhoods &amp; Adult Services</b>

### 5. Summary

The Rotherham North and Rotherham South Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) have now re-located from the council owned locality bases at Hampstead Green and Holywell Place to Rotherham Central Police Station.

This report proposes that the vacant units are transferred from the HRA miscellaneous portfolio to the HRA general housing portfolio to facilitate conversion works. The properties can then be re-let as secure housing tenancies, to meet local affordable housing need.

Sufficient capital resources to meet the costs of conversion have been identified within the current approved One Off Properties Budget within the Housing Investment Programme.

### 6. Recommendations

**That Cabinet Member agrees:**

- **Option 1 as identified in section 7.**
- **That a Local Lettings Policy be developed for the re-letting of 1 Hampstead Green.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

Safer Neighbourhood Teams were established within Rotherham in 2006. It was agreed that the teams would be located within a Police Station within their relevant SNT area where possible. There were, however, no South Yorkshire Police (SYP) office bases within the Rotherham North and South SNT areas. Accordingly, the Council initially agreed to provide these assets to SYP on a subsidised rent basis.

Further to this initial agreement on 8 December 2010 (Minute number 120) Cabinet resolved that SYP would pay a full market rent for their occupation of these assets and be responsible for its repair. Since this date, the Council have worked with SYP to finalise the lease and implement these changes. Recently, SYP relocated both teams to Rotherham Central Police Station to implement its own potential cost savings. Consequently, the Council's assets are now vacant pending a decision on their future use. Appendix 1 details the options that have been considered.

### **7.1 Rotherham North SNT- Hampstead Green, Kimberworth Park**

1, Hampstead Green is a three bedroom traditionally constructed house connected to the adjacent Hampstead Green aged persons housing complex. The property was previously utilised as sheltered warden accommodation and is shown edged in red on the plan at Appendix 2. The house consists of a dining kitchen, lounge area, three bedrooms and a bathroom.

### **7.2 Rotherham South SNT – 1 & 2, Holywell Place, St Anns**

1 & 2, Holywell Place are both located within and are integral to the Wharncliffe Flats complex at St Ann's in the centre of Rotherham.

1, Holywell Place is a one storey traditionally constructed flat which was previously utilised by Wharncliffe Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) as a community room. This asset is shown edged in red on the plan at Appendix 3. The flat consists of communal lounge, dining kitchen, store room and WC.

2, Holywell Place is a one storey traditionally constructed flat unit which was previously utilised as office accommodation for the asylum team. This asset is shown edged red on the plan at Appendix 3. The unit consists of a large room, five small office areas, 2 x WC's and a small kitchen area.

### **7.3 Future Operation of Rotherham North and South SNT's**

The Rotherham North and South SNTs are now operating from Rotherham Central Police Station, Main Street, Rotherham. SYP has been offered use of Greasbrough and Kimberworth Park neighbourhood offices for drop in purposes only on an interim basis. The Department of Housing and Neighbourhood Services are

currently discussing opportunities for joint Housing Champion, Ward Member and SNT surgery provision within local community centres.

### **7.4 Recommendation**

The options for the future use of the properties are detailed in Appendix 1.

Option 1 is recommended as it will enable three affordable units in areas of high demand to be re-let to support identified local housing need.

It is noted that the property at Hampstead Green is attached to an aged persons housing complex. It is therefore recommended that a local lettings policy is adopted in line with the previous approval for the re-letting of former sheltered warden accommodation which states that properties will be allocated to people on a decreasing age range with no history of anti social behaviour.

### **7.5 Affordable Housing Need**

Conversion will contribute towards the delivery of new affordable housing in the Borough.

There is a high demand and low turnover of the property types identified which is evidenced as follows from previous letting results:

- Three Bedroom House in Kimberworth Park- Advertised in July 2011 received 177 bids. The successful applicant had received a priority plus status on the 15/06/2011.
- One Bedroom Flats at St Anns- Advertised in August 2011 received 42 bids. The successful applicant had been on the priority waiting list since 02/11/08.
- Two Bedroom Flats at St Anns- Advertised in July 2011 received 103 bids. The successful applicant had been on the general waiting list since June 2006.

### **7.6 Value for Money Comparison**

In value for money terms, investing £37k to deliver three affordable units compares well with the cost of other options for delivering affordable housing.

For example, the cost to the council of delivering new build homes, assuming a grant rate of 50% from the HCA to support the build cost is detailed below:

- 3 bedroom house- approximately £64,298 per unit
- 2 bedroom apartment- approximately £39,913 per unit

## 7.7 Ward Member Consultation

The relevant Ward Members have been consulted about the proposed options.

Hampstead Green is located within Ward 21, Wingfield. Councillor Goult is supportive of the proposed option.

Holywell Place is located within Ward 2, Boston Castle. Councillors Hussain and Wootton are supportive of the proposed option.

## 8. Finance

The properties were previously occupied by the Police on a nil rent, nil repairs and insuring liability however SYP assumed responsibility for utility costs. The conversion of the units will reduce repairs and maintenance costs currently being charged to the HRA estimated at £2.5k per annum.

Subject to approval to convert the units, approximately £37k would be required to undertake conversion and improvement works. This money is currently available from within the 2012/13 HIP One Off Properties budget. Currently there are sufficient uncommitted resources within the programme to support this expenditure. Of the £300k budget allocation, currently no money has been committed however the following properties are recommended for investment and will be submitted to a future meeting for approval:

- 1 Holywell Place- £15k
- 2 Holywell Place- £15k
- 1 Hampstead Green- £7k
- 62 Woodland Drive- £17k
- 51 Middle Avenue- £53k
- Total amount properties awaiting approval: £107k
- Total amount remaining in 2012/13 One Off Properties Budget subject to approval of above proposals: £193k

As the properties are not currently within the HRA general housing portfolio, the properties would be subject to an additional annual management and maintenance cost.

The properties would generate an approximate £9,537 per annum combined rental income.

## 9. Risks and uncertainties

Delays in investment decision making will negatively impact upon performance indicators measuring empty homes relet times, rent loss on empty homes and Decent Homes targets.

Empty homes produce a negative perception of neighbourhoods and a negative reaction from customers, particularly at a time of increasing demand for affordable homes.

### 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The recommendation contributes to NI 155- delivery of affordable homes.

Timely decision making with regard to investment in empty homes will contribute towards improved empty homes relet and void rent loss performance.

This proposal will support our vision for Rotherham by helping to create safe and healthy communities through the provision of decent affordable housing to meet need, choice and demand.

### 11. Background Papers and Consultation

Detailed investment costs for each property are held by the Land and Property Team.

- The investment threshold for individual properties was confirmed at £20k by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2009, Minute J138 refers.
- On 27<sup>th</sup> November 2006, minute number 152 refers. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods approved the use of 1 Hampstead Green as a Rotherham North SNT base with an agreement that the associated rental income would be subsidised from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- On 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006, minute number 61 refers. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods approved the use of 2 Holywell Place as a Rotherham South SNT base with an agreement that the associated rental income would be subsidised from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods- 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Minute number 92. Sheltered Housing Warden Accommodation.

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## **Appendix 1- Option Appraisal**

The following options have been considered

### **Option 1- Transfer the properties to the general housing portfolio and undertake conversion works to facilitate re-letting**

RMBC would retain the buildings, transfer them into the housing stock portfolio and make funding available to convert the properties into residential units.

The Council would benefit from the asset value and annual rental income generated. It would also provide much needed affordable housing units to address the increasing housing demand within the borough.

A Feasibility Study has been undertaken to determine whether the centres can be converted, what works would need to be undertaken and the type of units that can be achieved.

#### **1 Hampstead Green, Kimberworth Park**

The SNT have not undertaken any major works within the building, accordingly only minor improvement works are required to facilitate the re-letting of the property within the general housing portfolio.

The property was previously utilised as sheltered housing warden accommodation therefore a door from the property provides direct access to the centre which would need to be sealed appropriately to prevent access from future occupants of the property.

The condition survey identified costs of approximately £7k including rewiring, new kitchen, new bathroom and minor works.

This property type will generate approximately £3556 gross rental income per annum, based upon existing rent levels. Therefore, it would take less than three years to recover the investment from the estimated rental income.

#### **1 Holywell Place, St Anns**

The property has not previously been utilised as residential accommodation, accordingly it will require conversion and adaptation works to facilitate re-letting as a one bedroom flat, the condition survey identified associated costs estimated at £15k.

This property type will generate approximately £2848 gross rental per annum, based upon existing rent levels. Therefore, it would take less than nine years to recover the investment from the estimated rental income.

## **2 Holywell Place, St Anns**

The property has not previously been utilised as residential accommodation, accordingly it will require conversion and adaptation works to facilitate re-letting as a two bedroom flat, the condition survey identified associated costs estimated at £15k.

This property type will generate approximately £3133 gross rental per annum, based upon existing rent levels. Therefore, it would take less than eight years to recover the investment from the estimated rental income.

### **Option 2- Retention as office accommodation**

The Council would retain the buildings as office accommodation. However, they are surplus to the Councils requirements therefore we would need to investigate whether there is demand from partner or external organisations for use.

Currently, we are not aware of demand due to their location within the centre of housing estates.

### **Option 3- Sale to Registered Provider (RP) and Conversion to residential units**

This option would transfer the properties to a RP with the properties being renovated and re-let as affordable units at the RP's cost. The Council would retain nomination rights for the properties. However, the RP would benefit from the property asset value and the future net rental stream. However, at a time of asset rationalisation and affordable housing funding constraints, it is unlikely that an RP would see this as an attractive proposition.

### **Option 4- Open Market Sale and Conversion to a residential unit**

We would sell the properties on the open market with a condition that they are converted to residential units.

This option would generate a capital receipt to the Council and transfer liabilities for improvement to the new owner. However, in view of the location of the properties it is likely that this would be on the basis of a reduced valuation.

### **Option 5- Demolition**

Demolition has not been considered as the properties are attached to other units. Whilst technically feasible at Hampstead Green, the resultant risks and costs of demolition works and the costs of creating new gables to the retained properties was not considered to be good value for money.

Appendix 2- 1 Hampstead Green, Kimberworth Park





Appendix 3- 1 and 2 Holywell Place, St Anns



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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Safe &amp; Attractive Neighbourhoods</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> May 2012</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Service Review – Community Safety Unit</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods and Adult Services</b>

## 5. Summary

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2012 Cabinet agreed the RMBC revenue budget for 2012/13. This included a £73,000.00 general fund revenue budget reduction for the Community Safety Unit.

This budget reduction will require revenue savings within the Community Safety Unit including the need for staff reductions within the establishment

A service review has been completed and consultation has taken place in accordance with the prescribed process with staff and unions.

This report describes the progress made in reviewing the structure and functions of the unit and recommends a new operating model.

A budgetary saving of £73,000 would be achieved by implementing the reviews findings.

## 6. Recommendations

### That Cabinet Member:

- **Notes the content of the report, the staffing implications arising from the proposals and the timescale for implementation.**
- **Notes the structural changes set out in the report.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

### **7.1 Background**

The need to undertake an organisational review relating to the Community Safety Unit is set against the background of the financial challenges faced by the Council. This review commenced on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012 and concluded following a period of consultation and meeting with staff and Unions on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

The review had two main objectives:

- To reduce costs to a more sustainable level, and
- To develop proposals for a service fit for purpose in the light of current and future anticipated demands

The review has been undertaken against the policy and performance context of the service (see section 11 below) and recognises both the statutory need to enable the Council's effective management of the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) Rotherham's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the discretionary elements relating to the co-ordination and support of the priorities of the SRP and partner agencies.

How the service works to address the above core elements can vary especially in the discretionary elements relating to the co-ordination and support of the priorities of the SRP. The balance of the review has been to enable reasonable resourcing of the maintained service to deliver the statutory responsibilities of the Council but also to maintain capacity to help develop and support partnership co-ordination against essential crime and disorder priorities.

Overall in the current financial position the current organisational arrangements are not financially sustainable, and the service needs to reduce its costs. The identified level of savings can only be achieved by reducing the number of posts within the service.

### **7.2 Principles**

The service has been reviewed and a new operating model proposed which is 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 - e.g. helping to create safe and healthy communities.
- 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 & Crime Commissioners and Police & Crime Panels

Streamlining and producing more action focused partnership arrangements is a priority of Rotherham's Local Strategic Partnership and certainly reflects the direction made very clear by the Government.

What is clear is that the commitment for partnership working is not diminished, with Government commitment to CSPs remaining strong and set within national publications such as the Policing & the 21st Century and Community Safety Partnership Deregulation consultations, together with linked Local Government Association and HMIP documents<sup>5</sup>. The positive future for CSPs has also been provided by written parliamentary answer by the Minister of Justice who also recognised potential for CSPs to create efficiency savings by reducing duplication and fragmentation of services<sup>6</sup>.

Effective CSP's are also seen by Government as a key element in service delivery in support of Police & Crime Commissioners who will replace the existing Police Authorities in November this year.

### **7.3 Proposals**

The Safer Rotherham Partnership is held in high regard both at national, regional and sub-regional levels and it is essential that, as the statutory CSP for Rotherham, it continues to be effectively managed and supported if it is to build on its achievements and meet future national and local demands. It is viewed that this should not be taken as the Council just providing a "secretariat" role but one that allows co-ordination, effective sharing of information, maximising external funding opportunities and a direct steer on the delivery of both key local and Government crime and disorder priorities<sup>7</sup>. A critical priority requiring partnership focus (advised by the Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment) continues to be anti-social behaviour (ASB) and how we manage and address ASB is a high priority for the SRP, RMBC and the residents of Rotherham.

Accordingly, principal work activity proposed will include the following areas:

- SRP management/co-ordination
- SRP Performance management including performance clinics
- Linkage to Police & Crime Commissioner and Police & Crime Panels
- Anti-Social Behaviour co-ordination/enforcement
- SRP secretariat
- SRP external funding management
- SRP information, intelligence & data sharing
- Intelligence led business processes
- Customer focus, victim and volunteer support & coaching
- Crime & Disorder advice, support, best practice & local innovation
- Co- production of the Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment
- Production and management of the Safer Rotherham Partnership plan to tackle crime, disorder and ASB

It is proposed that the Service will be redesigned to include the following full time equivalent posts:

- 1 SRP /ASB Unit Manager (Neighbourhood Crime & Justice Manager)
- 4 ASB Officers
- 2.2 Community Safety/SRP Administrators

The ASB function is also supported by a full time seconded Police Officer.



With the reduction in staffing numbers it will be important to prioritise those areas of the borough with the most significant problems. In part this prioritisation will be directed to traditional council estates, but with capacity for cross tenure response.

These proposals reduce the Community Safety Unit by 1.5fte Community Safety Officer posts.

The required budget reduction cannot be achieved only through the disestablishment of the Community Safety Officer posts. The following action is proposed in order to achieve full reduction:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Saving</b>
Disestablishment of 1.5fte Community Safety Officer Posts	£53,579.00
Reduction in team non-salary revenue costs	£12,360.00
Reduction in funding contribution to intelligence unit for analysis of off-road m/cycle ASB issues	£7,061.00
	<b>£73,000.00</b>

The proposals will be supported by the increased capacity of Housing Champions (through service re-alignment of issues such as lettings functions and proposed changes to neighbourhood office arrangements) to deal pro-actively as well as reactively to neighbourhood issues, directing more resource to front line service delivery and providing essential assurance to communities, through increased visibility and presence within the neighbourhoods.

The SNT's will continue to provide a focus for coordination of service activity on the ground between partners and the community.

A service improvement plan has also been developed to further improve and strengthen the anti-social behaviour management functions within the Council, which will include a training and development programme for front line staff. It is anticipated that training will commence in July, supported by Safer Rotherham Partnership SNT colleagues.

Consideration has been given to the integration of partnership and engagement elements of community safety work within the wider community partnership and engagement role of the Area Partnership Team. This is in the context of a refocusing of the work of the team towards more coordinated activity in areas of multiple deprivation, which will include action to tackle ASB and crime related issues. Critical to this approach will be development work to increase capacity within the community/voluntary sector to enable such organisations to lead on certain elements of community based activity. In doing so, more capacity can be created to enable partnership staff to address more complex and cross cutting issues etc.

## **8. Next Steps**

If these proposals are acceptable, it is proposed that

- The posts of SRP/ASB Unit Manager, Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and Community Safety/SRP Administrators be assimilated/job matched to the current post holders



- The current 1.5fte Community Safety Officer posts are disestablished.
- The current ASB Officer vacancy be 'ring fenced' to the holders of the disestablished posts, expressions of interest invited from them and a selection process commenced.
- A flexible approach will be applied to the selection process, i.e. work pattern, full time, part time, job share etc.
- Those who are unsuccessful in the recruitment process will be registered with the Talent Pool. At the end of the 90 days, if no alternative positions have been found, they will leave the Council through redundancy. It is expected that the new structure will be fully operational by the first week in September.

### **9. Finance**

In the 2011/12 financial year the Community Safety Unit budget was £250,692.00. The general fund provided £201,978.00 of this cost with the HRA contributing £48,714.00. This does not include for the ASB Officers who are funded through a separate budget. If the proposal is accepted, a net general fund saving of £73,000 would be achieved in 2012/13. The HRA contribution to the service for 2012/13 is £49,201.00.

The £73,000 reduction was agreed by Cabinet on the 22nd Feb and the figures have been embedded within the TM1 budget setting process for 2012/13 Budget Book.

The £73,000 reduction includes a £7k reduction in the contribution (via Community Safety) to partnership Off Road Motor Vehicle Intelligence (CIU). This is mainly because the CIU no longer, because of national ASB recording changes, provide specific ORMV intelligence analysis.

### **10. Risks and Uncertainties**

The impact of the proposal will reduce the Community Safety Unit's capacity in some aspects of partnership working, whilst retaining a focus on tackling neighbourhood ASB. This will result in a facilitation, enabling and empowering approach to working with both statutory and non-statutory partners.

The Community Safety Officer post is a neighbourhood focused role and reducing resources will have the potential to impact on communities, especially those which have been identified as benefiting from partnership interventions to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour. The scale of impact in reducing staffing resources is currently difficult to gauge but the co-ordination of other member agencies involved in the Safer Rotherham Partnership will be critical to sustain necessary works currently undertaken by Community Safety Officers.

The Community Safety Officers provide a universal service to the residents of Rotherham. However, some crime prevention/diversionary work by its nature is aimed towards younger people, such as holiday clubs and other diversionary activities as well as contributing to the provision of youth shelters and multi-use games areas. The same principles apply in respect of older residents, particularly in respect of crime prevention and personal safety advice. Through facilitation and co-ordination of service demand by the reduced team and with the support of internal and external partners, it is anticipated that the impact to service delivery can be managed at an acceptable level.

However, the ability to maintain an acceptable level of engagement capacity going forward will be dependent upon a number of factors. For example:

The work of the Community Safety Unit remains central to the aims of the Safer Rotherham Partnership across the Partnership network. The activity ranges from practical on the ground work in our localities, working with our Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Neighbourhood Action Groups in tackling local issues around crime and disorder, through to more strategic activity in the form of approaches to reducing crime and disorder. In addition, participation on local committees, task groups and community groups have been used as an underlying approach to help advise on how crime and disorder can be tackled in a problem solving partnership setting. It will be critical for partners to realise that the new service will not be able to provide the same level of capacity and there will need to be a greater need of self facilitation for the future.

### **11. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The current role played by the Community Safety Unit brings both co-ordination and capacity to ensure the delivery of both the statutory functions<sup>1</sup> of the Council with respect to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) i.e. Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) and functions focused to the delivery of the SRP's crime and disorder strategic priorities provided by the Partnership Plan<sup>2</sup>. This Plan is informed by an annual Strategic Assessment both of which are legally required and must be produced with community involvement and engagement<sup>3</sup>.

The strength of the SRP, which is recognised within the local arena, and more widely within regional and national government departments, has drawn positive commentary in several service inspections. In addition, self assessment, utilising the value for money six Hallmarks of Effective Partnerships<sup>4</sup> has showed the SRP to be positively positioned. These Hallmarks embed statutory requirements.

The Service contributes to the Corporate Plan's objectives of;

- Helping to create safe and healthy communities, and
- Improving the environment

In particularly the service helps maintain the current overall low crime rate in Rotherham, as well as continuing to address people's concerns about anti-social behaviour and their fear of crime.

Dealing with issues related to contaminated land has clear linkages to the seven outcomes of the Outcomes Framework for Social Care, and importantly includes:

- Improved Health and Emotional Well-being, by promoting and facilitating the health and emotional well-being of people who use the services.

### **12. Background Papers and Consultation**

The proposals have been subject to consultation with affected staff and unions. The formal one month period of consultation commenced with staff on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012 and ended on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012. **A further meeting was held with staff, HR and the Unions on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012.**

## References

1. Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Sections 6 & & as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002
2. Safer Rotherham Partnership; Partnership Plan 2010-11 (draft)
3. Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007
4. Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working'; September 2007
5. - Policing in the 21st century: reconnecting police and the people; Home Office, July 2010  
- "Conditional Offer" and Deregulation Consultation; Home Office Partnership Performance and Support Unit  
- Anti Social Behaviour, Stop the Rot & Inspection Findings; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Police, September 2010  
- Local Government Association's response to the Government's Policing in the 21st century consultation; 17 September 2010
6. Written Answer, 11<sup>th</sup> October by Nick Herbert (Minister of State, Justice) Hansard
7. Home Office Structural Reform

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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – DLT</b>
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>28th May, 2012</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>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</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods and Adult Services</b>

### **5.0 Summary**

Further to the report to DLT 28.02.12 which set out the draft Three Year Housing Investment Programme 2012/13 to 2014/15; this report informs of the nature and scope of works to be undertaken in regards to:

- Garage Site Investment
- Environmental Works
- Non-Traditional Housing Investment
- Community Centre Improvements (5 Year Programme)
- One-Off Property Investment Threshold

These planned and capital works are not wholly informed by the Council's stock condition database (Apex) and so the route to identifying the work is explained in the report along with the method of programme delivery.

### **6.0 Recommendations**

**That Cabinet member agrees:**

- 6.1 The approach to identifying and initiating investment works described in this report.**
- 6.2 To increase the one off property investment threshold that can be agreed by the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services from £20,000 to £45,000.**
- 6.2 To receive separate reports for consideration concerning one off properties which require major projects or works in excess of £45,000 per property are identified.**

## 7.0 PROPOSAL AND DETAILS

### 7.1 Background

7.1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet Member the proposed Three Year Housing Investment Programme (HIP) for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15 in respect of:

- Garage Site Investment
- Environmental Works
- Non-Traditional Housing Investment
- Community Centre Improvements (5 Year Programme)
- One-Off Property Investment Threshold

7.1.2 The report details how the programme has been compiled and identifies how various individual schemes of work included within the programme have been drawn up using information, where applicable, from the Council's Stock Condition database, APEX, Ward Members, Council Officers such as Housing Champions, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Repairs Technical Officers, Building and Programme Surveyors as well as being informed by tenants, leaseholders and residents.

7.1.3 In addition to the above, the report identifies that works are being delivered via four main project activities:

- 1 Strategy
- 2 Procurement
- 3 Consultation and scheme development
- 4 Delivery

Each has been progressed in parallel; this approach ensures that the works are procured, that contractors are in place and consultation is undertaken to inform schemes of work, prior to works commencing on site.

7.1.4 Whilst the Programme presented is for a three year period, the main focus of this report will be year one, 2012/13, as subsequent years' planned works will be reviewed on an annual basis. Total Spend in 2012/13 is anticipated to be:

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

7.1.5 The current investment threshold per property is £20,000. This investment threshold has been in place for several years without revision. Increasing this threshold to £45,000 will allow for decent homes, external and structural works to be carried out to miscellaneous properties, such as those appropriated from

General Fund Assets, in a more efficient manner. It is not a given that all properties will be invested in; an option appraisal approach will be taken to the asset which takes into account, housing demand, property value and location. Where disposal is identified as the preferred option, Ward Member consultation and Cabinet Member approval will still be required.

## 7.2 Details

7.2.1 The table below summarises the four programmes as follows:

	2012/13 £000's	2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's
Garage Sites	200	200	200
Environmental Works	500	1,500	1,500
Non-Traditional Housing	1,289	1,400	1,400
Community Centre Improvements (5 Yr Prog.)	250	150	150
<b>Total HIP</b>	<b>£2.239m</b>	<b>£3.150m</b>	<b>£3.250m</b>

7.2.2 A number of appendices accompany this report:

- Appendix A – describes the three year garage site programme
- Appendix B – describes the identified Environmental Works Schemes to date
- Appendix C – describes the draft order of investment in non-traditional housing
- Appendix D – describes the draft order of investment in community centres

7.2.3 In compiling the Programmes, the strategy aims to ensure that the Government's vision for sustainable communities – communities where people want to live and work, now and in the future is met.

To ensure that the funds available are maximised, and have the most impact, prioritisation of the identified schemes is necessary. The Strategic Housing Investments Service' Programme Delivery Team, works with colleagues in Audit and Asset Management to prioritise against the strategy objectives as follows:

**Priority 1** – Essential/immediate asset management need exists or, if new provision, it is targeted at priority areas for investment, such as localities previously identified in the Housing Market Renewal Programme or the Borough's deprived neighbourhoods. Works should improve the general sustainability of the areas (including community support, address security concerns or tackle crime and anti social behaviour). Consideration is also given to schemes where external match funding can be levered.

**Priority 2** – Urgent asset management need exists, or, if new provision, it is based on Neighbourhood Management and other stakeholders priorities and proposals to reduce fuel poverty, improve security, tackle crime and/or anti social behaviour.

**Priority 3** - Investment to fund improvements and maintenance to existing provision

**Priority 4** - Does not meet Strategy Objectives

- 7.2.4 At this stage indicative budget allocations have been made against specific work streams. However, when actual schemes of work are drawn up, individual budget allocations will need to be adjusted to meet target costs of work allocated to Contractors, whilst still ensuring that the overall budget allocation is not exceeded.
- 7.2.5 From time to time, works emerge that have not been anticipated or which have been identified to be undertaken in future years. When such works emerge, the above priority tests will be applied and if found to be a Priority 1 or 2 then consideration will be given to including these in the current programme year. As a consequence, programme slippage may result as it is unlikely that additional capital resource can be allocated. Programme changes will be managed through the HIP Monitoring process where an auditable account of programme changes will be recorded.
- 7.2.6 In line with the revised level of investment threshold; amendments to programme up to £45,000 will not require Cabinet Member support however, changes in excess of this threshold will require Cabinet Member approval in advance.
- 7.2.7 Not all of the investment streams have been fully allocated yet and as major schemes are identified an update report will be presented to Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods for approval.

## 8.0 Finance

- 8.1 The funding streams identified at 7.2.1 are supported by the Three Year Housing Investment Plan 2012/13 – 14/15. Skills and capacity to identify, design and procure the projects are contained within Neighbourhoods and Adult Services' Strategic Housing Investment Service and Audit and Asset Directorate.

Scheme delivery will be procured via a number of routes:

- Directly through the Councils HRA Programme Partners' Willmot Dixon and/ or Morrisons.
- Via a framework such as YorBuild, YorConsult, YorCivils or OGC
- In accordance with Standing orders for minor works by quote

The cost of procurement through a framework is contained within the budgets.

## 9.0 Risk and Uncertainty

- 9.1 The investment identified across the four schemes has been identified through various assumptions such as historic knowledge, Apex stock condition information and officer interpretation; as work is surveyed and schemes are designed and procured, it may emerge that value of work has been under or over-estimated. The HRA Business Plan might not be able to support additional investment over the three year period.
- 9.2 Monthly monitoring and low priority works scheduled to commence later in the year in order that scheme slippage and/or acceleration can be accommodated will mitigate the above.

## **10.0 Policy Performance and Agenda Implications**

- 10.1 The four strands of investment supports the Corporate Plan Priorities and is central to the longer term Housing Strategy:
- Making sure no community is left behind.
  - Helping to create safe and healthy communities.
  - Improving the environment.

## **11.0 Background Papers and Consultation**

DLT Report 28.02.12 – Three Year Housing Investment Programme 2012/13 to 2014/15

Director of Financial Services has been consulted during the preparation of this report.

### **Report Author:**

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Appendix A – The three year garage site programme

Appendix B – Environmental Works Schemes identified to date

Appendix C – Draft order of investment in non-traditional housing

Appendix D – Draft order of investment in community centres



## Appendix A – The Three Year Garage Site Investment Programme

Gross Figures		2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
		Investment Profile	Investment Profile	Investment Profile
GARAGE SITES				
	<b>Budget</b>	<b>£200,000.00</b>	<b>£200,000.00</b>	<b>£200,000.00</b>
	Aston	£59,584.43		
	Aughton	£7,009.93		
	Bramley	£14,019.86		
	Brinsworth	£10,514.90		
	Dalton	£5,257.45		
	Dinnington	£1,752.48		
	East Herringthorpe	£36,802.15		
	Flanderwell	£1,752.48		
	Henley	£1,752.48		
	Kiveton Park	£1,752.48		
	Laughton On Le Morthen	£12,267.38		
	North Anston	£5,257.45		
	Swallownest	£5,257.45		
	Thrybergh	£8,762.42		
	Thurcroft	£17,524.83		
	Wickersley	£8,762.42		
	HOOTON ROBERTS		£5,257.45	
	KILNHURST		£5,257.45	
	RAWMARSH		£133,188.72	
	SWINTON		£15,772.35	
	WATH UPON DEARNE		£42,059.59	
	BLACKBURN			£10,514.90
	BROOM			£22,782.28
	EAST DENE			£12,267.38
	KIMBERWORTH PARK			£54,326.98
	RICHMOND PARK			£1,752.48
	ROCKINGHAM			£28,039.73
	WHISTON			£56,079.46
	WINGFIELD			£17,524.83
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£198,030.59</b>	<b>£201,535.56</b>	<b>£203,288.04</b>

*Dependent upon 2011/12 outturn, there may be an amount of garage works to carry forward into the 2012/13 programme which may impact on the three year programme.*

## **Appendix B – Environmental Works Schemes identified to date**

A number of schemes have been identified through detailed site visits, information supplied by Neighbourhood Champions, and Ward Members which are prioritised as per the report.

The scheme of environmental works is based on issues to design out crime, address health and safety issues through small scale projects for example repairs to paths, installation of fencing anything that is outside of general repairs. Two schemes are currently underway:

- Pike Road – Brinsworth, is an environmental scheme based on the serious concerns expressed by SY Fire and Rescue Service over the location and safety of bin stores near points of building egress, accumulation of materials etc. Consultation with South Yorkshire Police identified that the lack of defensible space within the estate was the key driver for the antisocial behaviour. The project will address the level access around the apartment building, provide defensible space. The works to be completed over 2 years,

Phase A - £125,675

Phase B - £114,000

- Ridgeway Parking Bays scheme was identified in 2011/12 and will be completed in 2012/13 - £60,000

**Appendix C – Draft order of investment in non-traditional housing**

Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009 approved the Council retains and carries out structural repairs to Council owned non traditional properties year on year across the Borough. Below is a list of the remaining Council owned non-traditional properties identified for structural repair.

**Non Traditional Properties / Investment Programme 2012-13 and following years**

<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>£ All costs</b>
Swallownest	52	Reema Conclad Wimpey	501,280
Rawmarsh	87	Myton	756,680
East Dene	28	Dorlonco	151,200
Rawmarsh	44	Dorlonco	237,600
Rawmarsh	97	Wimpey No fines	854,080
Wath	132	Wimpey No fines	1,151,480
Kimberworth	40	Park Laing	417,240
Catcliffe	2	Trusteel	6,480
Brinsworth	6	Finnegan	12,960
<b>Total Investment Requirement</b>	<b>488</b>		<b>4,089,000</b>
		2012-13	1,289,000
		2013-14	1,400,000
		2014-15	1,400,000
<b>Total Budgeted in the 3 Year Plan</b>			<b>4,089,000</b>

**Appendix D – Draft order of investment in Neighbourhood Centres**

<b>Neighbourhood Centre</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Priority Status</b>
Shaftesbury House	St Anns	Boston Castle	North	Priority 1
High Nook	Dinnington	Dinnington	South	Priority 1
St Joseph's Court	Dinnington	Dinnington	South	Priority 1
Hepworth Drive	Aston	Holderness	South	Priority 1
Tickhill Road /Glencairn Court	Maltby	Maltby	South	Priority 1
Turner Close	Parkgate	Rawmarsh	South	Priority 1
Arbour Drive	Thurcroft	Rother Vale	South	Priority 1
Elizabeth Parkin	Ravenfield	Silverwood	South	Priority 1
Dorothy Taylor	Dalton	Valley	South	Priority 1
Victoria Court	Kiveton Park	Wales	South	Priority 1
Viking Way	Kiveton Park	Wales	South	Priority 1
Campsall Field Close	Wath	Wath	North	Priority 1
Mark Grove	Flanderwell	Wickersley	South	Priority 1
Dawson Croft	Greasbrough	Wingfield	North	Priority 1
Hampstead Green	Kimberworth Park	Wingfield	North	Priority 1
Wellfield Lodge	Kimberworth Park	Wingfield	North	Priority 1
Capern Road	North Anston	Anston and Woodsetts	South	Priority 2
The Lings	Bramley	Hellaby	South	Priority 2
The Steadlands	Rawmarsh	Hooper	North	Priority 2
York Gardens	Wath	Hooper	North	Priority 2
Bevan Crescent	Maltby	Maltby	South	Priority 2
Arcon Place	Rawmarsh	Rawmarsh	South	Priority 2
Pottery Close	Parkgate	Rawmarsh	South	Priority 2
Francis Howlett	Whiston	Sitwell	North	Priority 2
Vale Road / Warreners Drive	Thrybergh	Valley	South	Priority 2
Peregrin Way	Harthill	Wales	South	Priority 2
Fitzwilliam Square	Greasbrough	Wingfield	North	Priority 2
Heighton View	Aughton	Holderness	South	Priority 3
Model Village	Maltby	Maltby	South	Priority 3
The Grange	Maltby	Maltby	South	Priority 3
Robert Street/Victoria St	Masbrough	Rotherham West	North	Priority 3
Chapel Walk	Catcliffe	Brinsworth & Catcliffe	South	Priority 4
Godric Green	Brinsworth	Brinsworth & Catcliffe	South	Priority 4
Manor Lodge	Brinsworth	Brinsworth & Catcliffe	South	Priority 4
Merebrow	Catcliffe	Brinsworth & Catcliffe	South	Priority 4
Cliff Hill/Redwood Drive	Maltby	Hellaby	South	Priority 4
Mason Avenue	Swallownest	Holderness	South	Priority 4
Windy Ridge	Aughton	Holderness	South	Priority 4
Ann Rhodes	Brampton Bierlow	Hooper	North	Priority 4
Hurley Croft	Brampton Bierlow	Hooper	North	Priority 4
Mission Field	Brampton Bierlow	Hooper	North	Priority 4
Foljambe Street	Parkgate	Rawmarsh	South	Priority 4
Marshall Close	Parkgate	Rawmarsh	South	Priority 4
Greenfields	Rawmarsh	Rawmarsh	South	Priority 4
Rotherwood	Thurcroft	Rother Vale	South	Priority 4
Station Road	Treeton	Rother Vale	South	Priority 4
Bakersfield (Longfellow Dr)	Herringthorpe	Rotherham East	North	Priority 4
College Road	Masbrough	Rotherham West	North	Priority 4
Oates Close	Henley	Rotherham West	North	Priority 4

Appollo Street	Rawmarsh	Silverwood	South	Priority 4
Staple Green	Thrybergh	Silverwood	South	Priority 4
Sorrel Sykes	Whiston	Sitwell	North	Priority 4
Charles Street	Swinton	Swinton	North	Priority 4
Durham Place	Herringthorpe	Valley	South	Priority 4
Swinburne Place	Herringthorpe	Valley	South	Priority 4
High Greave Place	East Herringthorpe	Valley	South	Priority 4
Wooton Court	Thrybergh	Valley	South	Priority 4
Ash Grove	Bramley	Wickersley	South	Priority 4
Normanville	Sunnyside	Wickersley	South	Priority 4
St Mary's View	Munsbrough	Wingfield	North	Priority 4

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