

CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS
10th December, 2012

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

J49. ROTHERHAM'S STRATEGIC TENANCY POLICY

Further to Minute No. 30 of the Cabinet Member meeting held on 15th October, 2012, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported on the consultation feedback received regarding the issuing of fixed term (flexible) tenancies for tenants of social housing landlords.

The on-line questionnaire had been available from June to September and completed by 51 people. Elected Members had been consulted by a number of methods including Area Assemblies, Improving Places Select Commission, Seminar and the questionnaire.

There was strong opposition to the widespread use of fixed term tenancies across the Borough. It was felt that shorter-term fixed term tenancies, particularly the minimum 5 year, would make it difficult for people to settle and invest in an area and would undermine neighbourhood sustainability. It would be unwelcome in Rotherham both for Council properties and for stock owned by registered provider partners.

Feedback around the use of long term fixed term tenancies for the 1.3% of Rotherham's housing stock of 4+ bedroom homes was less clear. Further guidance was being sought on this issue. Tenants' situations changed over time and households may not continue to need a Council house but chose to do so for a variety of reasons. Fixed term tenancies could help to ensure people moved to a suitably sized property when they no longer required a larger Council house, freeing up housing to enable the Council to meet the needs of overcrowded families in priority need.

Should the Council continue to issue permanent secure tenancies across all its housing stock, there would be no direct financial implications for the Authority. If it opted to make use of fixed term tenancies for larger family homes, there may be a slight increase in void-related costs but it would be relatively minor as larger family homes only made up 1.3% of Rotherham's Council housing.

Resolved:- That the report be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

J50. 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 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended 2006 – information relates to finance and business affairs).

J51. HOUSING ACCESS REVIEW

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services presented a report outlining the aims for access to Housing Services going forward in the context of implementation of Civic Universal Housing Management System which included "MyService" online provision of services.

It was proposed that there be a staged approach, the first stage being a single inhouse provider of all telephony services and initial face-to-face enquiries with more complex administration tasks undertaken by staff within Housing and Neighbourhood Services. There would then be a period of evaluation to consider effectiveness and value for money.

The risks and uncertainties associated with the proposal were set out in the report.

Resolved:- (1) That the commencement of the restructure process regarding the integration of the First Contact Team call centre and the corporate Contact Centre to include a face-to-face services in Customer Service Centres be approved.

(2) That Customer and Cultural Services develop an out-of-hours service to deal with emergency repairs calls currently handled by Rothercare.

(3) That 9 posts be retained within Housing Services to deal with complex administrative tasks.

(4) That further work be undertaken, with a report to be submitted to the Cabinet Member, to explore the potential for trainee/apprentice intakes to ameliorate the impact of high staff turnover on the call centre and administration functions.

(5) That a report be submitted after Universal Housing was implemented setting out proposals for evaluating the Contract Centre Service to ensure it was fit for purpose and represents value for money when compared to other models in the market place.