

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION

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

**Date: Wednesday, 28th November,
2012**

Time: 1.30 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine whether the following items should be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended March 2006) of the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item(s) the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Questions from members of the public and the press
6. Communications
7. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 17th October, 2012 (copy attached) (Pages 1 - 6)
8. Extending permitted development rights for homeowners and businesses: Technical consultation (report attached) (Pages 7 - 13)
9. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Section 106 Planning Obligations (report attached) (Pages 14 - 20)
10. Localism Act 2011 - Strategic Tenancy Policy (report attached) (Pages 21 - 25)
11. Housing Repairs and Maintenance : Update (report attached) (Pages 26 - 36)
12. Date, time and venue for the next meeting:- Wednesday 9th January, 2013, 1.30 pm at the Town Hall

Improving Places Select Commission: membership: -

Councillors Andrews, Astbury, Atkin, Dodson, Ellis, Falvey (Vice-Chairman), Foden, Gilding, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Havenhand, Jepson, Johnston, Read, P. A. Russell, Sims, Swift, Wallis, Whysall (Chairman), Wright.

Co-opted members: - B. Walker, D. Corkell, J. Carr.

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
17th October, 2012**

Present:- Councillor Whysall (in the Chair); Councillors Andrews, Astbury, Atkin, Ellis, Gilding, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Jepson, Read, P. A. Russell, Sims, Swift and Wright.

Together with:- Councillor R. S. Russell (Cabinet Member for Waste and Emergency Planning), Councillor Smith (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development) and co-opted members Mr. D. Corkell and Mr. T. Roche.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dodson, Falvey, Foden, Havenhand, Johnston and Wallis.

25. WELCOME TO CO-OPTED MEMBER

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Terry Roche, a newly-appointed co-opted member, who was attending his first meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

27. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

28. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no matters to report.

29. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION HELD ON 5TH SEPTEMBER, 2012

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, held on 5th September, 2012, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

(2) That a progress report about agreements made in accordance with Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 be submitted to the next meeting of this Select Commission.

30. COLLECTION OF HOUSEHOLD REFUSE - WINTER WORKING ARRANGEMENTS 2012/2013

The Select Commission received a presentation from Councillor R. S. Russell (Cabinet Member for Waste and Emergency Planning) describing the household waste collection arrangements for the forthcoming Winter months, which will last from Monday, 26th November, 2012 until Friday, 29th March, 2013. Members viewed the information leaflets which will be distributed to households.

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

(The Chairman authorised consideration of the above item at this meeting, to enable Members to be informed of the revised arrangements prior to the commencement date)

31. ROTHERHAM TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

The Select Commission received a presentation from the Business and retail Investment Manager entitled "Rotherham town centre and the Portas pilot", concerning the regeneration of the Rotherham town centre. The presentation highlighted the following issues:-

: during 2009 and 2010, the recession and the banking crisis were the cause of a difficult period for town centre retail high streets, throughout the country;

: various initiatives were introduced to try and regenerate the retail sector in the Rotherham town centre (50 new businesses began during 2010 and there was a reduction in the number of vacant retail units); modest results were achieved;

: during September 2011, preparation work began for the pilot visit of retail adviser Mary Portas (there was extensive media coverage of this event);

: the perceived problems of the town centre are not unique to Rotherham, but are shared by many town centres throughout the country;

: the Portas pilot visit had been well received by the town centre businesses (which were assessed during the pilot scheme as providing a unique retail experience for the customer); the scheme attracted some grant funding to assist with the regeneration of the Rotherham town centre; there will shortly be a 'mystery shopper' exercise involving town centre shops;

: details were provided of the 'town centre package' (support for existing and new businesses in the town centre), which included vitality grants for businesses; business development grants for existing, profitable businesses; advice and support for businesses; customer service training; marketing training; and increased promotional work to attract customers to the town centre;

: there is potential for a 'leisure offer' to be introduced into the Rotherham town centre;

: the difficulties caused by the nearby retail competition (eg: the out-of-town shopping centres at Parkgate and at Meadowhall);

: footfall (ie: numbers of people visiting) is the main measure of a town centre's retail vitality; and since June 2011, Rotherham is the only town in England which has not suffered a reduction in town centre footfall; however, there still needs to be an increase in footfall in Rotherham and for that footfall to produce increased spending in town centre shops;

: a change to the town centre landscape will occur with the forthcoming development of the new Tesco supermarket, which will have an impact upon

town centre retail stores (eg: the Forge Island and at Corporation Street); it is anticipated that the supermarket will attract new customers to the Rotherham town centre; it was suggested that the Rotherham market ought to be developed to attract more customers, especially those migrating from the new supermarket;

: the Forge Island site (currently the location of the existing Tesco supermarket) will eventually require redevelopment, perhaps for leisure purposes, eg: cinema/theatre;

: the development of the Council's Riverside House office building and the New York football stadium has helped with the regeneration of that part of the town centre;

: the development of the Minster Gardens has also enhanced the attractiveness of the town centre; new businesses are now opening on High Street;

: the building of new properties has increased the number of people living in the town centre (most accommodation is for tenants, rather than property owner-occupiers);

: the reconstruction of the Rotherham railway station has now been completed; construction of the tram-train route, linking Sheffield, Rotherham and Parkgate, will soon begin;

: a larger number of students are being encouraged to study at the Rotherham College of Arts and Technology, increasing the possibility of a campus-style development;

Members asked various questions after the presentation:-

: the cost of car parking in Rotherham and (for the local authority) the costs of and income generated by town centre car parking;

: the policing of the town centre; Rotherham is considered to be a safe place, compared to some other town centres, despite some negative public perceptions;

: the need to ensure that town centre development will link together and that vacant and under-used property is quickly brought back into use; concerns were expressed that the town centre strategy sometimes prevents certain development taking place and may have a detrimental impact upon smaller retail centres elsewhere in the Rotherham Borough area.

Resolved:- That the information provided about the regeneration of the Rotherham town centre be noted.

32. SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYMENT

The Select Commission received a presentation from the Regeneration Manager describing a number of schemes which were intended to support increased employment opportunities in the South Yorkshire City Region. The presentation highlighted:-

- : apprenticeships and schemes for young people aged 16 to 24 years are a priority;
- : various grants and incentives are available for employers;
- : the National Apprenticeship Service, which provided support for small and medium enterprises, has now been reduced;
- : details were noted of the City Deal (a small amount of grant funding is being made available for apprenticeships in the City Region);
- : ensuring that the skills being acquired at school and in college are appropriate for local employers;
- : the various apprenticeships being made available within the Borough Council;
- : the supply chain project – organised with the two companies which carry out the maintenance of Council properties;
- : the Government's work programme (delivered in the Rotherham Borough area by A4E and Serco) to bring people from into work, so that they will have reduced dependency upon benefits;
- : the JobCentre Plus programmes, providing shorter-term work experience;
- : Enterprise Allowances provide support for people attempting to establish their own businesses;
- : sector-based work academies – providing training in the type of work available in the local area;
- : the Youth Contract, including wages incentives and voluntary work experience;
- : the Big Lottery Talent Match (a bid for funding for the City Region);
- : the role of the Council's Regeneration Team (Environment and Development Services) in assisting the creation of employment opportunities;
- : the role of the Rotherham Economy Board and the Skills Board.

Members requested the provision of additional information about the comparative rates of unemployment affecting men, women and recent graduates.

Resolved:- That the information provided about the support for employment schemes in the Rotherham Borough area be noted.

33. HOUSING STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, concerning Rotherham's Housing Strategy which is being rewritten to take account of public spending reductions and changes in national housing policy. A new draft Housing Strategy was produced in May,

2012 and was the subject of a comprehensive programme of consultation between June and August, 2012. The draft Strategy has been updated to take account of feedback from Elected Members, Council staff, partner agencies, the voluntary and community sector and from Rotherham Borough residents and is now undergoing the required process for final approval and endorsement. After consideration by the Improving Places Select Commission, the report and draft Strategy will be presented to Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods and ultimately Cabinet for approval. The publication of Rotherham's updated Housing Strategy is scheduled for the end of November, 2012.

The submitted report summarised the consultation programme and the way in which consultation has taken place, concurrently, on other key matters so as to ensure a holistic approach to strategic housing issues.

The Select Commission's consideration of this item included the following salient issues:-

: the efforts made to ensure that the Strategy is a shorter, usable document and one which will last for thirty years;

: the various commitments listed within the report;

: the consultation process undertaken as part of the development of the Strategy;

: the need to increase investment in the Council's housing stock, to ensure that the provision of housing is appropriate to the requirements of the Borough's population; reference was made to the proposed building of new houses during the next three years;

: the Council's buying back of former Council houses, which had previously been purchased by tenants under the 'Right to Buy' scheme;

: ways of tackling anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods, including the recruitment and role of the Housing champions; sometimes there are problems caused by younger tenants creating a level of noise which disturbs their elderly neighbours; details were provided of action taken against tenants who had committed various types of anti-social behaviour; the problem was considered to be significant, although the number of reported incidents has reduced during the past year (comparisons were provided between Rotherham and the three other South Yorkshire city/district councils);

: the energy efficiency of housing; the problems caused by fuel poverty;

: provision of housing to meet the needs of people with a disability;

: assistance made available for people who struggle to maintain their own homes;

: working with property owners in the private rented sector;

: working to try and help those people who have difficulties in affording the cost of buying their own homes;

: the length of Housing tenancies and the proposed introduction of fixed-term tenancies; the policy will attempt to ensure that larger housing is available to families which need such accommodation; this issue will be the subject of further debate by this Select Commission; (reference, the consideration of the Council's Allocation of Council Housing and Strategic Tenancy policies – Minute No. 30 of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods held on 15th October 2012);

: some local authorities (eg: Leeds City Council), currently subsidise people who down-size (ie: move from a larger to a smaller property); Rotherham MBC does not provide such financial support to tenants, although the possibility remains under consideration; it was noted that there may be an impact upon people's welfare benefits, should they not decide to down-size properties;

: some caution was expressed about the provision of houses which contained one bedroom only;

: in cases of the eviction of tenants, it was noted that the evidence provided for the introductory tenancy appeal hearings has to be of a very high standard;

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the contents of the draft Housing Strategy be noted.

(2) That the Improving Places Select Commission expresses the view that it is generally supportive of the aims of the revised Housing Strategy and asks that its comments are taken into account in the preparation of the final version of the Strategy.

(3) That a report be submitted to the next meeting of this Select Commission on the various housing issues, now discussed, including repairs, computer systems used for lettings and the Council's Allocation of Council Housing and Strategic Tenancy policies.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Improving Places Select Commission
2.	Date:	Wednesday 28 November 2012
3.	Title:	DCLG Consultation
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

Proposed response to the Government consultation document “Extending permitted development rights for homeowners and businesses: Technical consultation” dated 12 November 2012.

6. Recommendation

That Members of the Commission comment on the proposed response prior to a recommendation to the Cabinet Member.

7. Proposals and Details

The Government has produced a consultation document titled “Extending permitted development rights for homeowners and businesses” and asked for comments on the proposals by 24 December 2012. The consultation proposes changes to increase permitted development rights for extensions to homes and business premises in non-protected areas.

The proposal would amend the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995* to allow homeowners and businesses to make larger extensions to their homes and business premises without requiring a planning application, and also to allow quicker installation of broadband infrastructure.

Question 1 background

Currently Permitted Development (PD) rights exist for single storey rear extensions 4m from rear wall for detached and 3m from rear wall for other house types. The consultation proposes that these limits are increased.

The Government suggests that amenity of neighbours will be protected as the development will be restricted to: not more than 50% of curtilage; not more than 4m high and any extension with an eaves height of more than 3m must be set back 2m from the boundary. Other regimes e.g. Building regs will remain in place

Do you agree that in non-protected areas the maximum depth for single-storey rear extensions should be increased to 8m for detached houses, and 6m for any other type of house?

Yes No

Comments

One of the ‘Core planning principles’ of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is that planning should “always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.” The proposed amendments would not comply with this as due to the negative impact of a 6m or 8m extension on the boundary with a residential garden.

In our Borough our experience is that single story rear extensions are generally approved with a rear projection of up to 4m which is the limits of what we consider to be acceptable (but with lower eaves height than the proposed 3m). Larger extensions (either in length or height) on or close to the boundary are generally refused due to impact on the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and we have a good record of success at appeal when independently scrutinised.

In relation to detached dwellings and the proposed 8m – it is noted that many

properties on modern housing estates are built on small plots often very close to or on the boundary with the neighbouring property. An 8m extension would therefore have a huge impact on the neighbour's amenity.

Extensions with a mono pitch roof on the boundary would have an even greater impact on amenity as the roof height on the boundary could be up to 4m high (as the eaves would be on the other side of the extension and could meet the 3m limit).

In terraced properties where residents either side take advantage of the PD the impact on the middle resident would be significant, effectively creating a tunneling effect. Changes in ground levels (with the neighbour at a lower level) would exacerbate the problem further.

The condition restricting the PD to 50% of the available land (i.e. front, rear and side gardens) is misleading as a safeguard as it includes all the land within the curtilage, excluding the house, and the garden areas to the front of some properties are larger than the rear garden.

The proposals could also lead to disproportionate additions to dwellings in the Green Belt which could not be controlled.

We cannot see that the changes proposed will have a significant impact on the economy as relaxing planning rules will not improve the affordability of extending homes – an owner is not going to decide not to extend his property purely because of the requirement for planning permission, it is more likely because he/she cannot afford to build the extension in the first place.

Question 2 background

The Government is keen to support family annexes to increase housing supply and is looking to see how this can be carried out more frequently and easily.

Are there any changes which should be made to householder permitted development rights to make it easier to convert garages for the use of family members?

Yes No

Comments

The existing system provides adequate scope to convert existing garages and PD is only removed where there is a problem to be mitigated against e.g. inadequate parking provision.

Question 3 & 4 background

Shops and financial / professional services currently have PD for extensions of 50m² (provided this does not increase the floorspace by more than 25%). In order to allow businesses to grow quickly it is proposed that these limits are increased with the restriction that if the extension is along the boundary of a residential property it be set in 2m from the boundary.

Do you agree that in non-protected areas, shops and professional/financial services establishments should be able to extend their premises by up to 100m², provided that this does not increase the gross floor space of the original building by more than 50%?

Yes No

Comments

As residential amenity would be protected through this suggested approach and the shop front unaffected. We have no objection to this proposal.

Question 4: Do you agree that, in non-protected areas, shops and professional/financial services establishments should be able to build up to the boundary of the premises, except where the boundary is with a residential property, where a 2m gap should be left?

Comments

As residential amenity would be protected through this suggested approach and the shop front unaffected. We have no objection to this proposal.

Question 5 background

Offices can currently be extended up to 50m² (provided this does not increase floorspace by more than 25%) under permitted development. To allow greater flexibility it is proposed that this be increased.

Do you agree that in non-protected areas, offices should be able to extend their premises by up to 100m², provided that this does not increase the gross floor space of the original building by more than 50%?

Yes No

Question 6 background

Currently new Industrial buildings and warehouses can be built in the curtilage of an existing industrial building providing up to an additional 100m² (provided floorspace not increased by more than 25%). This is proposed to be doubled, subject to certain

limitations – e.g. no loss of turning space for vehicles, no building within 5m of boundary.

Do you agree that in non-protected areas, new industrial buildings of up to 200m² should be permitted within the curtilage of existing industrial buildings and warehouses, provided that this does not increase the gross floor space of the original building by more than 50%?

Yes No

Comments

Due to the existing limitations in relation to height and siting being retained we have no objections to the proposal.

Question 7 & 8 background

Government is suggesting that these are introduced as temporary changes, as exceptional measures due to current economic circumstances. Development proposed under these measures must be completed within 3 year period.

Do you agree these permitted development rights should be in place for a period of three years?

Yes No

Comments

Notwithstanding our strenuous objections to this relaxation of the permitted development rules on residential properties, if PD rights are to be changed because they have been assessed as causing no harm then they should be permanent. Temporary change will only cause confusion and uncertainty.

The problem will occur after this 3 year amnesty. The majority of LPA's have produced guidance on what is deemed to be an acceptable limit on house extensions. None advocate extensions as large as what is being proposed here. An additional concern is how we would consider applications of this magnitude after the 3 years when they are still going to be considered unacceptable, but a neighbouring property may have built a similar extension under PD.

The condition that development must be completed before the end of the three years will be difficult to enforce, at what stage do we consider the development to be complete and if they don't notify us of the development, as many people don't if they consider it to be PD, how could we later prove that it hadn't been completed in time?

Question 8: Do you agree that there should be a requirement to complete the development by the end of the three-year period, and notify the local planning authority on completion?

Yes No

Comments

Notwithstanding our concerns above, if changes are to be introduced for a temporary period and the 3 year limit imposed there has to be some evidence / certification of compliance to prevent future disputes / enforcement issues.

Question 9 background

National park, AONB, conservation areas, world heritage sites would be excluded from the proposed changes.

Do you agree that article 1(5) land and Sites of Special Scientific Interest should be excluded from the changes to permitted development rights for homeowners, offices, shops, professional/financial services establishments and industrial premises?

Yes No

Comments

In addition to the amenity issues raised above these areas of special control require additional consideration.

Question 10 background

Currently fixed broadband apparatus such as cabinets, telegraph poles, overhead lines have PD (subject to prior approval). It is proposed to remove the need for prior approval to increase certainty for developers for a period of 5 years. The Government feels that the development of good practise would resolve any siting / design issues and that the certainty of a fast reliable broadband network is a necessity.

Do you agree that the prior approval requirement for the installation, alteration or replacement of any fixed electronic communications equipment should be removed in relation to article 1(5) land for a period of five years?

Yes No

Comments

Relaxation of PD is not considered to be acceptable in areas of special control as siting / design issues may mean a long term negative impact on these areas. LPAs currently work effectively with operators to find effective solutions without any unnecessary delay.

Development of Best Practice guidance could lead to significant variation between authorities and increase uncertainty for developers.

Do you have any comments on the assumptions and analysis set out in the consultation stage Impact Assessment? (See Annex 1)

Yes No

Comments

We strongly disagree that Planning is the reason why extensions are not being built, it is much more likely that it is due to the fact that people are out of work, facing the threat of redundancy or on low income.

Councils operate an effective process of encouraging development and assisting developers through the process to produce an acceptable scheme. The £150 cost of an application would not put off someone seriously considering putting a £30,000 extension to their property. It gives all the security that what they are building is acceptable within the community whilst protecting the amenity of neighbours. Builders will still need plans to work to, even if the resulting extension is permitted development.

8. Finance

The financial implications are that there would be a reduction in the number of planning applications submitted during the 3 year period.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The uncertainty in the future of whether extensions were built within the 3 year period would arise, though this is not a risk for the Council.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

No relevant implications.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11188/permittted.pdf

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Improving Places Select Commission
2.	Date:	Wednesday 28th November 2012
3.	Title:	Planning Obligations – Section 106 Procedures
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

Section 106 agreements are a means of securing community benefits through the planning system. This report reviews the way Rotherham implements s106, the benefits accrued and the proposed changes to be made in the way the obligations are dealt with.

6. Recommendations

- **The contents of the report be noted**
 - **Further annual reports be produced for this Commission.**
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7. Proposals and Details

A Section 106 Agreement is a legal agreement between the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the applicant/developer and any others that may have an interest in the land.

They are Planning Obligations authorised by Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Planning and Compensation Act 1991 Section 12. The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 also sets out restrictions on the use of Planning Obligations.

Planning Obligations are used following the granting of planning permission (normally major developments) to secure community infrastructure to meet the needs of residents in new developments and/or to mitigate the impact of new developments upon existing community facilities. They can also be used to restrict the development or use of the land in a specified way or require specific operations or activities to be carried out on the land.

Benefits will be secured either in kind or via financial contributions depending on what is required. The main areas to benefit are generally: Affordable Housing; Primary and Secondary Education; Urban Green Space; Highways Improvements; Public Transport etc. This list is not exhaustive and any other relevant and necessary matter may be included within a Planning Obligation that can not be secured through the normal planning process but is required in order for the development to be deemed acceptable in planning terms which would otherwise be refused.

Each development is judged on its own merits, however there are certain requirements that apply to most major applications e.g. Affordable Housing / Education Provision.

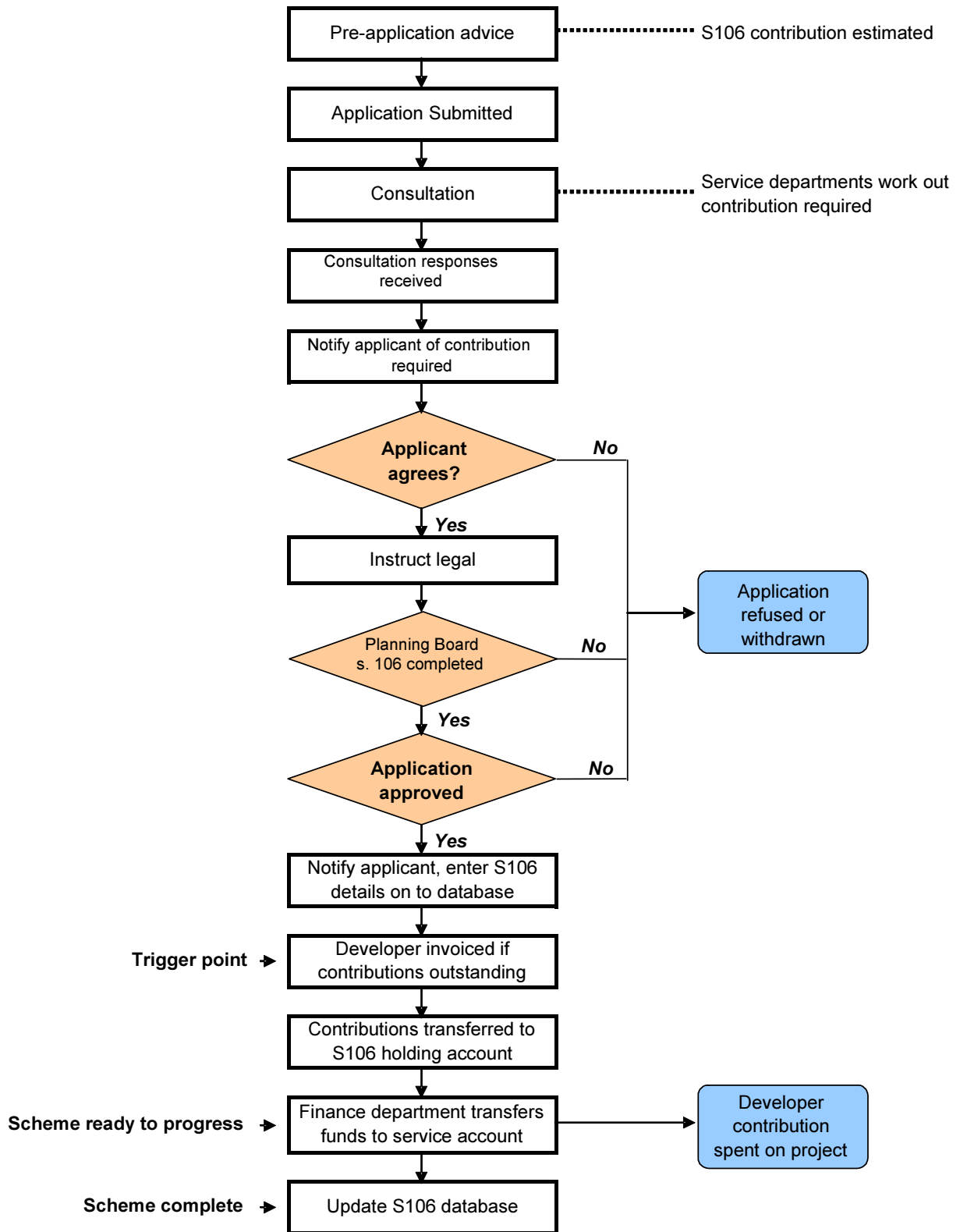
The use of planning obligations is governed by the fundamental principle that planning permissions cannot be bought or sold.

Current Policy

Currently, the Planning Service encourages all developers to engage in the pre-application advice process where all issues, including potential s106 requirements, will be discussed. All planning applications submitted for 15 or more dwellings are required to contribute to the provision of affordable housing in consultation with Strategic Housing & Investment Services. For all developments over 10 dwellings, consideration is given to the necessity for the provision of open space (in consultation with Leisure and Greenspaces) and Education provision (considered with Schools and Lifelong Learning). All other requirements are considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the necessary service areas.

This process relies on each recipient service engaging in the process, considering the impact of the proposed development at an early stage, then providing a justified reason for the required contribution together with calculations used, to ensure consistency.

Figure 1: Section 106 planning obligations process



The majority of planning applications including a section 106 agreement are reported to Planning Board and the details of the proposed agreement included in the report for consideration by Members. At this stage this normally includes the heads of terms of what is required together with details of any reasons such as abnormal costs that the developer claims should be taken into account in reducing the requirements. Assuming Board resolves to approve the application Legal Services complete the Planning Obligation prior to planning permission being issued. The details of the amount to be paid and when (at specified trigger points) or the action required is set out in the Planning Obligation.

The collection of the contribution therefore depends on whether the planning permission is granted and then on whether the applicant actually implements the planning permission.

Should the development be implemented, within the 3 year period generally allowed, and a trigger point reached then an invoice is raised and the monies credited to a central code before Finance transfer the funding to the recipient service area. The process is shown in the form of a flow chart at Figure 1 above.

Once s106 agreements are signed the “trigger points” for contributions control when payments should be made and this may be at various stages in the development e.g. prior to commencement (which may be any time within 3 years of the permission being granted) or on completion of “x” amount of residential units / floorspace or prior to occupation. Therefore the monitoring of the development and s106 agreements is essential to ensure that payments are made at the appropriate time. In terms of financial planning of projects, utilising s106 monies, this is difficult to do in advance with any certainty as the contribution relies on the timescales around progress of the development which is outside of the Council’s control.

The move away from s106 to Community Infrastructure Levy will remove the reliance on information being provided by individual services for each individual application, and therefore provide more certainty for developers, the Local Authority and the public on the infrastructure provision related to new development. However, it must be noted that s106 can still be used in conjunction with CIL going forward.

Benefits Secured

Contributions secured by s106’s, negotiated through the planning process over the last 5 years, amounts to approximately £22,000,000 pledged for: open space provision and maintenance, highway improvement, bus service subsidies, education contributions etc. Obviously this contribution will only be paid if the development is implemented and once the trigger point is reached. For example a large percentage of the monies (approximately £15 million) to be generated through s 106 relates to the Waverley New Community (3980 houses, schools, retail, community facilities, green space, play space etc) which will be built out over a 20 year period with trigger points though out the life of the development. Over the same period there are additional s106 requirements which do not require a financial contribution e.g. play area provision on site and provision of affordable housing.

Payments made over the same period (where earlier permissions have been granted, developments implemented and trigger points reached) total around £1.5

million and relate to provision of highway improvements around the Advanced Manufacturing Park, provision of play areas and multi use games areas, education contributions etc. Additional non financial requirements have been provided and include a requirement to provide 239 affordable residential units.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

It is expected that the use of s106 agreements will be largely replaced by CIL. The tariff based system will require set contributions based on the scale of the development. The monies can be used to support development by funding necessary local infrastructure, for example highway schemes, play areas, schools etc and is intended to simplify the process by providing certainty about the amounts to be paid and therefore remove the necessity for each contribution to be negotiated separately for each application.

Work has been undertaken as part of the Local Plan to produce an Infrastructure Delivery Plan – which provides the evidence base around infrastructure needs across the Borough to accommodate the new development proposed – the costs from which will be used to inform a tariff schedule. Once the tariff schedule is in place the requirement for s106 will be much reduced and used for site specific mitigation only.

Both s106 and ultimately CIL are dependant on the economic climate and viability of sites and schemes. Current advice from the Government encourages Local Planning Authorities to renegotiate s106 at a developers request if viability is an issue to bring forward stalled sites.

Developments

1. In addition to the work carried out on CIL for the Local Plan a very clear policy relating to developer contributions has been included which states:

“Where appropriate and necessary, development proposals will be required to provide contributions (including financial contributions and planning obligations) in order to meet the needs arising from the development itself and/or compensate for any adverse impact of the development on local amenity or resources. Such contributions will relate to the provision of:

- a) affordable housing;*
- b) the provision, enhancement and maintenance of any greenspace and play equipment on-site or the enhancement of off-site facilities where these would serve the development’s open space needs*
- c) new and/ or improvements to infrastructure including public and/ or private transport infrastructure including footpaths and cycle lanes, travel plans, highways and public transport improvements;*
- d) the progressive introduction of network management technology to maximise benefits for public transport, cycling and to reduce congestion and delay.*
- e) improvements to the quality of individual green infrastructure assets and the broader green infrastructure corridor network*

- f) new and/or improvements to existing sport, leisure, recreation and other community facilities such as health facilities, places of worship, community building provision;*
- g) provision of educational infrastructure to accommodate anticipated demand arising from development;*
- h) workplace facilities and support, such as training plans and programs, and childcare facilities;*
- i) the provision of education programmes, training and local employment opportunities*
- j) countryside access arrangements, woodland planting/ management and local landscape and environmental improvements schemes;*
- k) habitat creation/ enhancement on and off site as the result of either direct or indirect impact of development;*
- l) flood mitigation and/or construction of parts of, or contributions towards the construction of, the Rotherham Renaissance Flood Alleviation Scheme;*
- m) the provision of utilities infrastructure*
- n) renewable energy generation”*

The prioritisation of these elements and the contributions towards them will be further developed through the introduction of a CIL Levy and Charging Schedule for which there will be further consultation.

2. In relation to provision of schools places and the impact of future development a Cross Service Strategic Schools Planning Meeting has been established, as a result of the recommendations from the Cabinet School Planning Away Day. Its remit is to enable all services to meet to allow a more strategic overview towards the forward planning of future school places to be established. The allocation and development of future sites via the Local Plan will be fed into the schools forward planning work to ensure future needs can be adequately met.

3. Finance have reviewed the s106 process and established clear lines of invoicing, collection and monitoring of s106 monies.

4. Additionally, a corporate s106 officer working group has been established, with work being undertaken since the summer, and the first meeting to be held at the beginning of December.

The remit of the group is to: Assess the effectiveness of the current processes used to prepare s106 and seek improved use and monitoring; to establish clear links between financial resources and deliverability of schemes set out in the agreements, assessing and monitoring existing agreements, providing input to future s106 agreements and forming the basis for a CIL steering group.

The group incorporates representatives from Planning, Finance and Legal Services together with representatives from all potential recipient services (as no one officer / service is responsible for s106) and will be chaired by the Planning Manager.

Consultation of the Local Plan has also raised issues regarding the provision of infrastructure for new development and therefore ways of raising public awareness of s106 and then CIL will also be considered

Next Steps

Actions and information sharing from the corporate s106 officer working group will improve management / coordination of planning obligations.

The group will be used to discuss current applications and assist to improve effectiveness of negotiation with developer.

Detailed records of the calculation of commuted sums will be reported to the working group to ensure consistency.

Recipient services will be required to have in place a monitoring procedure and report back to steering group on a quarterly basis to ensure a clear audit trail for timing of and projects contributions spent on by recipient services.

A report on monies received to the Council will be prepared for the meeting and recipient services will then ensure that the monies are expended in a timely manner and on projects directly connected to the development.

Finance will be represented on the group to ensure continuing sound financial governance is in place regarding receipt of s106 contributions.

5. From the information provided to the working group an annual report for members will be collated of s106's pledged during the period, monies received in conjunction with a s106 and projects that the monies have been expended on.

8. Finance

Finance have established a clear means of monitoring s106 payments and spend and will form part of the corporate working group.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The intentions of the proposals are to reduce risks around:

Negotiations failing to produce maximum benefits

Agreements are not being properly monitored and payments missed

Monies not being expended on the agreed projects, or monies having to be repaid to developers as not spent within specified time periods or on specified projects.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The work is part of the development of the Local Plan and related Infrastructure Delivery

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Legislation: Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 & Section 12(1) of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991.

Guidance : Circular 05/2005

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting	Improving Places Select Commission
2.	Date	Wednesday 28 November 2012
3.	Title	Rotherham’s Strategic Tenancy Policy
4.	Directorate	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

Through the creation of the Localism Act, 2011, and other legislation around social housing reform, the Coalition Government has introduced a number of options for social housing landlords to allocate and manage their housing stock.

It is a requirement of the Localism Act, 2011, that local authority landlords publish a Strategic Tenancy Policy, which sets out the authority’s approach to the use of fixed term tenancies (sometimes referred to as flexible tenancies), by January 2013.

The consultation feedback on this issue clearly demonstrated a strong opposition to the widespread use of fixed term tenancies across the borough. It was felt that shorter-term, fixed term tenancies would make it difficult for people to settle and invest in an area and would undermine neighbourhood sustainability.

Feedback around the use of long term, fixed term tenancies for the 1.3% of Rotherham’s housing stock of 4+ bedroom homes is less clear and it is on this issue that further guidance is sought.

6. Recommendations

- **Improving Places Select Commission are asked to consider the issues in this report and provide advice for consideration by Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods and Cabinet around the issuing of fixed term tenancies for Rotherham’s larger, (4+ bed roomed) family homes**

7. Proposals and details

7.1 Background

As part of its package of Localism, Welfare Reform and austerity measures, the Coalition Government has introduced a raft of changes to the way in which affordable housing is provided in England. In the Localism Act, Government has set out measures which allow registered providers (including local authorities and registered social landlords), increased flexibility in the way they allocate and provide tenancies. At the heart of this are two key changes;

- I. The issuing of fixed term (flexible) tenancies for tenants of social housing landlords (as opposed to secure ‘lifetime’ tenancies for all)

- II. Local authorities will have increased flexibility on how they allocate social housing (this will be dealt with in a separate report)

7.2 Strategic Tenancy Policy

Legislation enacted through the Localism Act places a duty on all local authority landlords to produce a Strategic Tenancy Policy. The purpose of this policy is to set out the broad objectives to be taken into consideration by registered providers operating within their local authority area. Registered providers will 'have regard to' Rotherham's Strategic Tenancy Policy when formulating their own policies on how they will exercise the options which Government has afforded them through reforms to social housing policy and legislation. This Strategic Tenancy Policy should cover;

- How fixed term tenancies will be used
- The circumstances in which permanent secure tenancies will be granted
- Criteria for re-issuing tenancies at the end of a fixed term
- How a tenant may appeal or complain against the length of tenancy awarded

Strategic tenancy policies are to be published in January 2013 and reviewed every five years.

Once Rotherham's approach to long term fixed term tenancies for larger family homes is understood, its Strategic Tenancy Policy will be drafted and presented to Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods, Cabinet and Registered Provider Partners, prior to publication.

- The Strategic Tenancy Policy will be published in January 2013 and implemented from April 2013 onwards
- The Strategic Tenancy Policy will be reviewed before 2018

7.3 Fixed term tenancies

The vast majority of social housing tenancies issued by social landlords are either assured tenancies issued by registered social landlords or secure tenancies issued by local authorities. As long as the tenancy conditions are met these two types of tenancy provide the security of a home for life to social housing tenants.

New social housing tenants are often issued with 'introductory' or 'probationary' tenancies. These tenancies are usually for a period of no more than 12 months and become assured or secure tenancies on expiry (assuming there have been no difficulties during the period of the introductory or probationary tenancy).

Recent legislation enables social housing landlords to issue fixed term (also known as flexible) tenancies to new tenants. This type of tenancy offers a property for a specified period of time, from a minimum two year to a maximum 18 year period. At the end of the fixed term period landlords are able to review the tenancy and either;

- Issue a further fixed term tenancy
- Offer a secure/assured tenancy, or
- Manage the expiration of the fixed term tenancy

Government believes the introduction of fixed term tenancies will give local authority landlords another tool with which to manage their properties.

7.4 Would fixed term tenancies be appropriate in Rotherham?

The results from the consultation exercises regarding the whole scale use of fixed term tenancies was very clear in that fixed term tenancies, particularly the minimum 5 year fixed term tenancies, would be unwelcome in Rotherham, both for council properties and for stock in the borough owned by Rotherham’s registered provider partners.

Supporting sustainable neighbourhoods is a key priority for Rotherham and there is a real concern that issuing council tenancies for a shorter fixed term period would potentially prevent tenants from committing to an area and therefore undermine sustainability. The council accepts that a level of transience within neighbourhoods is healthy but should not discourage households from settling into areas.

The results of the consultation on considering fixed term tenancies for larger family properties (Rotherham’s 261 properties with 4+ bedrooms) was less clear, polarised opinions and the relatively low number of responses may not accurately reflect interested parties’ views; this is clearly a contentious issue with both positive and negative implications for Rotherham.

Advantages of issuing fixed term tenancies for larger family homes	Disadvantages of issuing fixed term tenancies for larger family homes
Would assist large families to get the home they need and prevent overcrowding	Tenants may feel unable to settle
Reduce the opportunity for tenants to rent out spare rooms	A minimal increase in turn-over of larger family homes and associated voids costs
Reduce fuel poverty linked with under-occupancy	Increased transience due to time limited nature of fixed term tenancies
Make better use of Rotherham’s comparatively low number of larger, family homes	Tenants having to move out of a home where they’ve raised their families and are emotionally attached to
Overcrowding and poor housing has been linked to poor educational attainment, poor physical and mental health, stress and even family breakdown	A small additional administrative burden to manage fixed term tenancies and re-house tenants when fixed term tenancy expires
Minimise tenants’ benefits reduction due to bed room tax	

Tenants’ situations change over time and households may not continue to need a Council house but choose to remain for a variety of reasons (low rent, satisfaction with the Council as a landlord, security, and other related benefits such as RTB). Fixed term tenancies can help to ensure people move to a suitably sized property when they no longer require a larger council house, freeing up housing to enable the Council to meet the needs of overcrowded families in priority need.

7.5 How might fixed term tenancies for larger family homes work?

It may be beneficial for Rotherham to consider issuing long term, fixed tenancies for 4+ bed room homes as a way of helping large families to get a tenancy for a large property, as;

- At October 2012 there were 342 families on the housing register with between 4 and 9 children in houses too small for their needs
- RMBC owns just 261 properties with 4, 5 and 6 bedrooms (1.3% of council stock)
- Of these 261 properties, 45% (117) of them house just one occupant.
- 3 couples have each moved from a 4 bedroom house to a smaller property with the support of Rotherham's Right-Size (downsizing) scheme

Consideration is sought as to whether very long term fixed tenancies for larger family homes, followed by the offer of a permanent secure tenancy in a smaller property, is a means of sympathetically managing occupation/overcrowding.

- 1) A tenancy offer for a 4 bed plus property would be for the maximum fixed term of 18 years (18 years is the maximum term for a fixed term tenancy, according to government guidance), but we would seek to support families with children up the age of 21.
- 2) 6-12 months before the fixed term tenancy is due to expire a review would take place, and;
 - a. if children have secured alternative accommodation, the fixed term tenancy would cease and tenants would be offered a smaller property suitable to their needs on secure basis
 - b. if there are still any children under the age of 21 living in the property the tenants could be given the choice of either signing a further, shorter fixed term tenancy (3 years) or be granted a permanent, secure tenancy on a property which meets the needs of their household size

The fixed term tenancy offer would be made explicit in the advertisement for the property so tenants would be aware of long, fixed term nature of the tenancy prior to bidding. It is envisaged that potential applicants will perceive this as a reasonable and fair approach as it is likely that they themselves will have waited for a considerable period to be offered a larger home.

Fixed term tenancies would not affect existing tenants. In reality, fixed term tenancies issued in 2013 are unlikely to expire until 2031 but at that time would offer better opportunities to manage council housing stock for the benefit of overcrowded families.

8. Finance

Should RMBC continue to issue permanent secure tenancies across all its housing stock there will be no direct financial implications for Rotherham. If RMBC opts to make use of fixed term tenancies for larger family homes there may be a slight increase in void-related costs but this will be relatively minor as larger family homes make up only 1.3% of Rotherham's council housing.

9. Risks and uncertainties

Many registered providers own stock which spans multiple local authority areas. The practicalities of aligning their use of fixed term tenancies with the Strategic Tenancy Policies of several local authority landlords would lead to a lack of consistency for their tenants living in different local authority areas.

Legislation states that registered providers should '*have regard to*' the local authority's Strategic Tenancy Policy but this term is open to interpretation and it may be that registered providers do not mirror the local authority landlord's approach to fixed term tenancies.

The Localism Act seeks to devolve some elements of decision making from central government to local government. A consequence of such devolution is the perception that consequences of implementing/not implementing the options available at a local level would sit with the local authority.

10. Policy and performance agenda implications

- Corporate Plan – Making sure no community is left behind
- NAS Service Plan, 2012
- Housing Excellence Plan
- Housing Strategy
 - Commitment 1, we will deliver Council housing that meets people's needs
 - Commitment 2, we will increase the supply of affordable rented housing in Rotherham
 - Commitment 7, we will help people in Rotherham's most disadvantaged communities

11. Background papers and consultation

Background papers

- Update position on allocations review and strategic tenancy policy, October 2012, Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods
- [Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England](#). CLG, November 2011
- [Localism Act, 2011](#). CLG, November 2011

Appendices

- Appendix A, consultation programme and results of on-line and member questionnaires

Consultation

The consultation for both allocations and the issuing of fixed term tenancies was included with in the Housing Strategy consultation programme. This ran from June to September 2012 and specific workshops and questions around applying locally determined criteria to Rotherham's open housing register and the use of fixed term tenancies were held throughout that consultation. As well as face to face consultation events two questionnaires were issued;

- A questionnaire was available online throughout the consultation period and was completed by 51 residents
- A questionnaire was emailed to all elected members in October with a one week turn-around time; 7 completed questionnaires were received

A full consultation programme, with results of the on-line survey and member questionnaire, is contained in appendix A.

Once guidance is received Rotherham's draft Strategic Tenancy Strategy will be drafted and shared with registered provider partners prior to publication in January 2013.

12. Contact details

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting	Improving Places Select Commission
2. Date	Wednesday 28 November 2012
3. Title	Housing Repairs and Maintenance : Update Report
4. Directorate	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

This report seeks to provide a summary update in respect of the Repairs and Maintenance Service provided for the Councils Housing Stock two years beyond the externalisation of the service as requested by Improving Places Committee.

6. Recommendations

That the comments in this report are noted.

7. Proposals and details

Background

The delivery of the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Repairs Service was transferred to Morrison and Willmott Dixon Partnership on the 1st of November 2010. This involved the TUPE transfer of the existing staff from the In House Service Provider. Moving the provision from one of internal to external delivery was a significant step for the Council and the customers of the service. The decision to do this was made on the back of an Audit Commission recommendation that market testing should be carried out and the fact that the existing arrangements were in financial deficit.

The basis of the new contract also represented a significant change in approach to charging for the service focusing on maximising cost certainty and minimising risk to the Council. On three work streams, Responsive Repairs, Minor Voids (Voids not requiring capital investment) and Gas Repairs and Safety checks a fixed price per property approach was adopted. It must be understood that in order to avoid risk pricing by the contractor this does not mean all risks are included in the price. The cost covers the day to day “are going to occur” events (example blocked WC, loss of heating) it does not cover high cost one off repairs or rechargeable events that will be paid for as a variation. This approach to pricing avoids the risk of the Council carrying cost for things that happen once in a while and where the frequency may change over time due to ongoing capital investment. For example planned capital investments in roofing will over time reduce the demand for major roof repairs currently paid as variations. So this cost will diminish over time and as this element is not locked into the Price Per Property (PPP) the Council will see the benefit.

Other work streams, Capital / Major Voids, Planned Work Schemes, Aids and Adaptations and Capital investments are charged on a more traditional basis of Schedule of Rates due to these being measured works which would be difficult to accommodate in a fixed price arrangement.

The contract contains financial risk and reward for the contractors in respect of performance. These impacts in several ways:

- Open book accounting has been adopted – overspends at contractor risk – a mechanism for shared savings is in place which can both return financial sums to the Council and impact on future pricing in a downward direction.
- Contractors have an element of profit at risk dependent upon performance:
Morrison – 70% of profit at risk against performance
WDP – 60% of profit at risk against performance
- A future extension of the contract beyond the first 5.5 year term is performance related.

The initial transfer of the service went well and there were few issues with the movement of staff.

The extreme weather experienced almost immediately post transfer did caused significant issues particularly in respect of maintain heating within the housing stock. An unprecedented and unforeseen level of frozen condensate pipes on boilers lead to loss of

heating for many residents this was exacerbated by issues of access to the estates due to heavy snow.

Further issues were experienced in below standard service delivery in the months that followed as new processes and procedures were established and bedded in. It was inevitable some issues would arise when undertaking such a significant transfer, these are now behind us.

Customer Insight

In December 2011, we brought staff together from within the Council's Repairs and Maintenance team and our construction partners Willmott Dixon and Morrison's to review and follow real life customer journeys from start to finish to help change the way things were done for the better. The outcomes from the staff workshop and the customer experiences were embraced and used to help improve things:

- Improvements in appointment systems- introduced a customer mutual agreement appointment
- Keeping customers better informed - Over 70% of customers have received receipts via text in advance of the repairs being completed
- Reviewed variation processes to speed things up and reduce delays
- Improved diagnosis of damp
- We now complete trial properties for refurbishment work in each area prior to the full programme commencing allowing quality of work and customer service standards to be agreed in advance. Partners have increased site supervision on refurbishment work
- Introduced a new way to calculate the 'percentage of repair jobs completed to an acceptable standard' by using the information from our own independent Quality Assurance Inspections to help improve the quality of work carried out

We have seen increases in the number of repairs completed on time, with more repairs completed 'right first time', and fewer appointments cancelled. Customers have told us we are also doing substantially better at keeping them informed about their appointments, including via text message. These improvements have led to an increase in customer satisfaction.

Customer Feedback

During 2011/12, we improved the complaints response from 68% to 100% within six months. Improvements identified through complaints include:

- Improvements in information on gas servicing
- Boiler replacements changed from 28 days to nine day priority
- Programmes for renewing locks to communal lighting service cupboards
- Introducing damp meters for RMBC Technical Officers

We take complaints very seriously, and we have seen a significant reduction in complaints, down from 73 for the month of January 2011 to 7 for October 2012.

The biggest single improvement is a reduction in complaints about the repairs and maintenance service. Satisfaction with the repairs service is currently 99.39%

The aim of this report is to update Members two years on about developments and service delivery.

Where are we now?

The service has made significant progress in the last 12 months in respect of performance and customer satisfaction. At the end of the 2011/12 financial year all the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reported to the Directorate Leadership Team were on target. Scrutiny of the performance by the Performance and Quality team along with Tenants Groups confirm that the outturns are reflective of reality. This is further supported by low levels of complaints accepting that within an area of service carrying out levels of activity; in excess of 40,000 responsive repair jobs per year, some things will go wrong from time to time.

Monthly measurement of the same performance indicators at the half year (FY 2012/13) indicate sustained levels of performance.

Criteria	Rating a start of contract	Rating at end September 2012	Target
Customer Satisfaction	98.61%	99.38%	95%
Appointments Made & Kept	89.53%	97.84%	98.5%
Repairs Completed on Time	88.10%	99.08%	99%

Attached at appendix A is the full set of KPIs reported within the contract with outturns at the half year 2012/13.

Significant progress has been made in changing the emphasis away from emergency and urgent repairs to a more planned approach. At the outset of the contract this ratio was 60/40 it currently it stands at 40/60. (Emergency & Urgent Jobs 40.80%, Non Urgent 59.02% - data at 7th November 2012). While not in line with perceived best practice of 30/70 taking into account local knowledge further progress is likely to be at the expense of customer service and as such is not recommended.

The service is has also undertaken a number of other initiatives seeking to improve the customer experience:

- Restructure of the team responsible for delivery – Contract and Service Development Team
- Increasing the number of front line staff
- Allocation of specific areas to Technical Officers – named point of contact for repairs
- Embracing agile working to allow more time on the patch
- Adopting Text Messaging notification of repairs
- Increase levels of monitoring around quality of outturn

The impact of these changes in management and approach has demonstrably delivered service improvements which have been recognised by Members, Service Users and Officers alike.

The Payment Model

The arrangements for payment were highlighted on the opening section of this report and have been developed as we have progressed through the contract. The PPP model has had its challenges in agreeing what is in the PPP and what is out of scope but these issues have been addressed and agreements reached. We have cost certainty around a significant proportion of our repairs (C66%) and the out of scope variations are clearly understood.

For example in this financial year we have seen an increase in the levels of significant roof repairs due to extremes of the weather (heavy rain and some strong winds). Equally we are embarking on some significant capital works to roofing which will over time reduce these costs.

The objective is to reduce the levels of variation by focusing our investment using the knowledge gained from the repairs history; this should assist us to achieve this objective.

Performance Management

With regards to the Repairs and Maintenance service all the R&M performance indicators have achieved the cumulative year end targets. This has been achieved through being pragmatic, dedicated and having a proactive approach in our partnership working. All parties have worked together and been focused on putting actions into practice to help improve things and supported and shared good practice within the partnership. Most importantly the understanding of the customer view of the service has been critical to achieving this improvement. This is shown with year on year improvements on "Right First Time" and "Appointments Made & Kept" which saw improvements rise to 74.50% in 10/11 to 92.70% in 11/12 and 80.88% 10/11 to 98.81% in 11/12.

Learning from complaints

Reports of damp constituted a significant proportion of repair complaints and disrepair claims received in 2011/12. The issues were highlighted and now 100% of damp reports are now inspected

A new tenancy start date was delayed by weeks due to a high security door being damaged and the need to measure and supply a new one. In response to their concerns the contractors have arrangements to access temporary high security blank doors which can be installed pending the delivery of a standard high security door

Open Book Accounting

The contract is subject to open book accounting and any cost overruns are at the Contractors risk. Any savings are subject to a shared saving mechanism presenting the Council with an opportunity to take a proportion of any savings as a financial rebate and also to be reflected in future year on year pricing. For the Financial year 2012/13 this has resulted in a gain to the council around £750K

Responsive Repairs

This area of the service is deals with the day to day repairs delivered to the Council's housing stock, in excess of 40,000 repairs per year across the borough to C21, 000 properties. At the start of the contract there were some significant issues to be addressed in regard to both timeliness of responses and quality of work. Following the transfer of the service workshops were held on a regular basis to identify issues and work on solutions.

Examples:

- The initial process for dealing with broken windows was to raise a job for making safe and then raising a second job following feedback to the client to replace the window. This resulted in windows being left boarded up for unacceptable periods initiating complaints and dissatisfaction. The process was reviewed and now a single job is raised and the work completed all be it in two visits.
- Inspections of work on site indicated poor workmanship and use of inadequate materials with recalls at rejections at unacceptable levels. This was address through a process of quality checks, feedback to operatives in toolbox talks given by RMBC officers and workshops to review and challenge progress.
- Levels of customer complaints and enquiries were unacceptably high due to shortfalls in performance and poor communication. Front line staff have been put in place to ensure that queries raised are answered promptly and the allocation of Technical Officers to geographic areas has helped to reduced these down to a minimum keeping customers informed and responding to the issues they raise.
- Work has been done with the Call Centre to improve scripts and diagnosis resulting in improvements in performance – foe example improved right first time performance because we send the right trade. With the return of RBT to the Council further work will be undertaken to improve the robustness of the Call Centre and in particular the Out of Hours service.

The processes we have are now embedded and the service has shown improvement on a sustained basis with low levels of complaints and high levels of satisfaction. This is not to say that there is no more to do but we have reached a milestone on the journey, establishing a sound platform from which to move forward.

Beyond delivery of the Responsive Repairs Service the contract also delivers on 5 other work streams:

- Voids – Major & Minor
- Gas Safety & Cyclical Works
- Planned Works
- Capital Works
- Aids and Adaptations

Voids

The performance around the delivery of works to Voids in 2011/12 fell short of expectation not only on the part of the contractor who were in many respects victims of unsatisfactory

process on the part of the Council. Action has been taken in restructuring NAS to address the shortfalls in respect of process and this is reflected in progress with Void turnaround. The Contractors have taken on additional responsibilities and are now meeting their responsibilities in respect of returning properties in a timely manner. The number of Void properties that are out of circulation remains low and there is an ongoing focus on achieving the target turnaround times for letting.

Overall quality of workmanship has also improved in respect of voids handed back to the council.

Last year saw us ranked below average for the time taken to let properties, when compared to over 200 other organisations. This has improved over the last six months and we are now in the middle quartile.

Individual performance monitoring is being developed to highlight further areas of improvement.

Performance on voids in 2011/12 made positive progress, especially the number of long term empty properties being reduced from 150 down to 7. This will be taken forward into 2012/13 and as such will see a significant improvement in the performance of the performance indicator, the number of properties let also increased by 19% based on the previous year's outturns, this has been achieved by streamlining the team and the processes used. Although the average re-let time is still above target at circa 29 days improvements continue to be made.

Management of the keys to keys process by the Contractor has now been fully implemented with both contract partners and is already having a positive impact on performance.

Monthly control targets are being set to cover the next 6 months to inform further improvements.

Gas & Cyclical Works

One key area in this work stream is the maintenance of compliance with the Councils responsibility, as Landlord, with gas safety legislation. Since the start of the contract this has seen a significant improvement in compliance. The table below shows the compliance percentage for the last 6 months demonstrating sustained improvement.

Month	Minimum acceptable percentage against 100% Compliance objective	Outturn
April 2012	99.6%	99.81%
Mat 2012	99.6%	99.81%
June 2012	99.6%	99.84%
July 2012	99.6%	99.80%
August 2012	99.6%	99.81%
September 2012	99.6%	99.73%

This position reduces risk for the council of breaching Health and Safety regulation and reduces costs of enforcement through gaining legal access.

Gas responsive Repairs

Despite investment in new boilers and systems during the Decent Homes programme we still have significant levels of demand on heating repairs – 18,500 jobs per year which is equivalent to almost one call out for every property where heating is installed; this is over and above the annual safety check. At this level the number of repairs is running ahead of other comparable organisations and work is ongoing to reduce the call outs. Specific actions to date:

- Review of scripting to help with better diagnosis.
- All systems are now fitted with a magnetic filter to remove damaging particles from the water in the system
- We have stopped fitting battery powered room thermostats due to the high levels of call out these cause – all new installations are hard wired.
- We are developing self help guidance to be posted on the RMBC website as well as sending out advice to our Tenants about management and control of heating systems.

Following the extreme weather of December 2010 / early 2011 action has been taken to seeking to reduce the risk around frozen condensates:

- Condensate pipes that froze in 2011/11 have been reconnected with a drain point in the pipe work to ease the process of creating a relief point should they freeze again.
- All new installations are internal piped where ever possible (80%) the remaining ones are insulated to minimise the risk of freezing.
- A small number of properties at high risk (Boilers in lofts where the condensate froze in 2010/11) are being specifically targeted for remedial work.
- The CSD team along with our partners have developed an escalation plan to be adopted in case of issues arising in extreme weather.

WDP are looking at new ways of working and are seeking to change working patterns to support service improvement. This will mean some necessary changes to contracts of employment to increase flexibility. Demand for repairs follows a pattern with high demand at the start of the week and at the end of the week both times when under current arrangements WDP are down to half staffing due to the current 4 day working pattern – this they seek to change to a 5 day arrangement to even out resources availability.

Planned and Capital Works

Both contractors are actively carrying out planned and capital schemes across the borough.

The focus over the next few years will be on external improvements, roofing, rain water goods, pointing etc. This will both improve the visual impact of the estates and ensure security of the stock for the future.

A focus for the client team is and remains both quality of outturn and timeliness of delivery. Significant progress has been made in respect of quality of outturn, some work remains to be done in respect of timeliness.

Aids and Adaptations

Both contractors deliver works on Aids and Adaptations in three work areas:

- Minor Fixings
- Minor Adaptations
- Major Adaptations

These works are measured against fixed timescales for each area of work and progress reported monthly – 97.87% of works were delivered on time in September 2012.

Contractors Corporate and Social Responsibility

Both contractors have embraced this aspect of their initial bid and the results are visible in the commitments they have made to Rotherham:

Morrison:

- Have opened the promised training academy and we are seeing not only local staff but others from outside area attending this facility.
- They have sponsored the local Football Club – The Morrison Stand
- They have delivered works to the Shilo Project and in the process received an award for their efforts

Willmott Dixon

- Have undertaken works at Rotherham Hospital and adopted the charity involved for further support this financial year.
- They are sponsoring the Rotherham Titans Rugby Club
- They have provided 123 man days in voluntary work in the borough.

Both should be commended for their visible actions it is very easy to make promises about community support in a Tender and then not deliver on these.

What does the future hold?

The Contract and Service Development Team as the name suggest are committed to working with both partners to modernise the service and improve the experience for the customer. We started on a journey in November 2010 and have work through some difficult challenges to establish the service with our external partners. We have seen significant improvement through joint effort and must now seek to build on that platform.

What will we be working on?

Service development is a journey and we have reached a milestone on the way from which we must move on, objectives for the next year are:

- Working with Morrison FS new owners, Mears, to ensure the progress made to date is embedded and the changes in the background do not disrupt the service.
- To improve customer access and communication at first point of contact we have started to review customer access within our Housing Services and we aim to implement the high level recommendations to deliver a 24/7 repairs service from the Council's customer services contact team, rather than from Rothercare Direct.
- Continuing the focus on quality of outturn and workmanship with a view to further improvement
- To improve perception and recognition of the service by delivering to the highest standards
- We are working with our partners to reduce the level of minor defects and ensure that the level of customer care received is of the highest standard.
- To step up the delivery of additional Capital Works over the coming years
- We have put in place a plan to improve the process for tenant alterations. This will ensure that customers and the Council are clear on what can and cannot be altered. Customers have clear guidelines which have been written for the customer. This enables them to make a more informed decision when considering a major alteration and everything that is required prior to the Council giving permission to start.

8. Finance

There are no specific financial issues in relationship to this report.

9. Risk

There are no specific risk issues in relationship to this report.

10. Background papers and consultation

Appendix A 2012/13 Half Year KPI outturns
RMBC Housing Account 2011/12

11. Contact name

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Partnership Overall

KPI Ref. No.	Description	Target	Sept 12 Performance	DOTFP
ROKI 1A	Overall Customer Satisfaction	95.00%	99.38%	↑
ROKI 1C	Response rate	60.00%	70.38%	↑
ROKI 1D	Overall satisfaction with adaptation works	98.50%	100.00%	↑
ROKI 1E	Customer complaints	8.00	5.00	↓
ROKI 2A	% of emergency repairs completed within target total	99.00%	99.48%	↑
ROKI 2B	% of urgent repairs completed within target	99.00%	99.62%	↑
ROKI 2C	% of routine repairs completed within target	98.00%	98.76%	↑
ROKI 2D	Average number of days to complete minor voids	15.00	9.99	↓
ROKI 2E	Average number of days to complete major voids	22.00	14.20	↓
ROKI 2F	% of total responsive repairs completed within target	99.00%	99.08%	↑
ROKI 2G	Average time taken to complete routine repairs	28.00	9.48	↓
ROKI 2H	% of total planned and capital repairs completed within target	93.00%	100.00%	↑
ROKI 2I	Average time taken to complete adaptation works	96.00%	97.87%	↓
ROKI 3A	% of Repairs Completed to An Acceptable Standard	94.00%	95.57%	↑
ROKI 3Ba	% of responsive repairs completed "Right First Time"	92.00%	94.09%	↑
ROKI 4a	% of responsive repairs where an appointment has been made was kept	98.50%	97.84%	↑
ROKI 5A	Accident Incident Rate (AIR)	100.00%	100.00%	↑