

CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS
1st September, 2014

Present:- Councillor McNeely (in the Chair); Councillors Godfrey and Roddison.

J30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were made.

J31. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14TH JULY, 2014.

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods held on 14th July, 2014.

Further to Minute J25 (Installation of Wood Burning Stoves or other solid fuel appliances in Council Properties) it was requested that the resolution be amended to include the additional word shown here in italics: - 'That the Council's policy would be to decline *future* applications for Tenant alterations relating to the installation of wood burning stoves and other solid fuel appliances in Council properties.'

Further to Minute J29 (Little London, Maltby – Response to resident petition) it was requested that the resolution at (2) be amended to include the additional clause shown here in italics: - '(2) That the local Ward Councillors be informed about the work being undertaken, *and Councillor Beaumont, Maltby (Ward 9), be a member of the Task and Finish Group.*'

Resolved: - That, with the amendments above, the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods, be accepted as an accurate record.

J32. RECEIPT OF PETITION - YORK GARDENS AND CENTRE.

The Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods noted receipt of the petition containing 20 signatures from the residents and users of York Gardens and its associated Centre regarding the lettings of bungalows on the estate.

Resolved: - (1) That receipt of the petition relating to York Gardens and Centre be noted.

(2) That the petition be referred to the relevant Council Department to investigate the issues raised, and a report be presented to the relevant Cabinet Member/ Cabinet outlining the outcome/s of the investigation.

J33. RECEIPT OF A PETITION - EAST DENE PARK.

The Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods noted receipt of an electronic petition containing 2 signatures requesting the Council to 'Save East Dene Park from anti-social behaviour and vandalism'.

Resolved: - (1) That receipt of the petition relating to East Dene Park be noted.

(2) That the petition be referred to the relevant Council Department to investigate the issues raised, and a report be presented to the relevant Cabinet Member/ Cabinet outlining the outcome/s of the investigation.

J34. HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (PERIOD 4, JULY 2014)

The Director for Housing and Neighbourhood Services (Neighbourhood and Adult Services Directorate) presented the report that outlined the status of the Housing Investment Programme at Period 4 (July 2014).

The report outlined the budget breakdown by scheme for 2014/2015 based on the current approved Housing Investment Programme. The report listed the works included within the Housing Investment Programme and the budget allocation, forecast and any variance related to the works.

Explanations were provided in relation to areas of variance, including: - capital works, asbestos removal and testing, district heating conversion/ upgrades, new IT system, disabled adaptations (public sector), disabled adaptations (private sector), non-traditional investment and enabling works (HRA land).

The main variance related to the disabled adaptations (private sector) which was reporting a variance of £704,660 against the agreed budget of £1,311,000. Approval was sought for additional funding for Private Sector adaptations from the Right to Buy capital receipts. This would comprise of £639,000 within current reserves and £65,660 of income generated from 2014-2015 Quarter One Right to Buy sales.

Discussion ensued on the report presented: -

- Sustainability issues relating to funding the disabled adaptations requirements;
- Funding models used by other authorities;
- The Council's current policy on applying a claw-back on private properties sold following adaptations.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That approval be given for funding for Private Sector Adaptations of £704,660 from Right to Buy Receipts as outlined in the submitted report.

(3) That a report be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods outlining options for the medium-term funding of Disabled Adaptations.

J35. NEIGHBOURHOODS GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15 - TO JUNE, 2014.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Neighbourhood and Adult Services Finance Manager (Business Partnering, Financial Services, Resources Directorate) that provided a forecast to the end of the 2014/2015 financial year based on actual income and expenditure relating to the General Fund to the end of June, 2014.

The forecast to the end of the 2014/2015 financial year was an underspend of £24,000 against an approved net revenue budget of £574,000. This represented a variation of -4.2% of the total budget.

A summary was provided in relation to the Service headings regarding the main areas of variance.

Resolved: - That the report be received and the content noted.

J36. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2014/15 - TO JUNE, 2014.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Neighbourhood and Adult Services Finance Manager (Business Partnering, Financial Services, Resources Directorate) that provided a forecast to the end of the 2014/2015 financial year based on actual income and expenditure relating to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to the end of June, 2014.

Overall, the HRA was forecast to outturn on budget with a transfer from working balance (reserves) of £1.393million, which was a reduction of £46,000 against the approved budget.

The Finance Manager gave an update on the budget heading relating to contributions to housing repairs. This budget was volatile in respect of void properties but overall was on budget.

The report noted the risks and uncertainties related to the HRA budget at the time of reporting, relatively early in the financial year; these issues including inflation, vacancy factor, repairs and maintenance, rental income and impairment of fixed assets.

Discussion ensued and the following areas were considered: -

- The Council's Lettings Policy;
- The current situation relating to rent arrears.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

J37. ROTHERHAM FURNITURE SOLUTIONS - SALE AND DISPOSAL OF GOODS POLICY.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Director for Housing and Neighbourhoods that related to the Rotherham Furniture Solutions (RFS) Service. The revised policy updated the Service's management systems to minimise the risk of fraud.

The Rotherham Furniture Solutions Service opened in 2003/2004 and had a turnover in excess of £60,000 per week. An audit of the RFS took place in February, 2014, to check the adequacy controls of the administration. One of the key findings of the internal audit was in relation to the sale of items that could not be recycled within the Furnished Home Scheme.

Items that could not be reused back in the scheme due to cosmetic damage, but were operational, had been sold in the past to avoid waste. This was additional income for the Council and also created space for stock items. No formal approval for the sale of items had been given.

The Sale of Goods Policy now submitted satisfied the recommendations of the audit report by: -

- Ensuring that the scheme, when selling goods, was operating within the remit of corporate financial regulations;
- Making clear the rules of how items were sold and who they were sold to;
- Ensuring that management systems were in place to prevent fraud;
- Setting out the processes by which items were assessed and the decision making hierarchy of who items could be sold to;
- Maximising the use of furniture assets to ensure Best Value and income generation for the Council;
- Highlighting the process for disposal of items that cannot be either recycled within the furnished tenancy scheme, or sold as second hand due to them being beyond economic repair;
- Stock determination – assessment of items;

- Sale of second hand items – it was proposed that Council employees were not able to purchase any items to ensure transparency;
- Disposal of goods beyond economic repair and unable to be reused or sold.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised: -

- Detail on the pricing model for the new and second hand items that were part of RFS.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That the sale and disposal of used furniture within the RFS scheme, as set out in the submitted report, be approved.

(3) That the RFS Sale and Disposal of Goods Policy, as set out in Appendix One to the submitted report, be approved.

J38. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods take place on Monday 6th October, 2014, to start at 10.00 a.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.