

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate  
Street, Rotherham.**

**Date: Monday, 17 January 2005**

**Time: 9.30 a.m.**

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

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Void Property Monitoring (Pages 1 - 6)  
- to note the action and progress taken
4. Exclusion of the Press and Public  
Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (provision of goods).
5. Options for the District Heating Management Contract (Pages 7 - 10)  
(Exempt under Paragraph 9 of the Act – negotiation of terms)
6. Budget 2005/06 - Update  
(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Authority)

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 January, 2005</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Void property monitoring for 29 November 2004 to 31 December 2004</b>
4.	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods</b>

**5. Summary**

Performance on re-let times and rent loss on void properties needs to improve this year for the Service to meet its performance targets, and the needs and aspirations of tenants in Rotherham.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**THAT THE CABINET MEMBER NOTES THE ACTION TAKEN AND CURRENT PROGRESS**

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**7. Proposals and Details**

The targets set for HES68 and BVPI 69 are 20 days and 1.25% respectively. The report shows that the number of voids has significantly reduced with performance on rent loss being 1.07%, and the overall time to let dwellings from 1 April 2004 to 31 December 2004 is 16.53 days.

**8. Finance**

No additional resources required. Improved performance will increase rental income.

**9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Failure to re-let tenancies in a timely manner will affect the sustainability of communities and increase rent loss, which in turn reduces the ability of the Service to deliver quality housing management services.

**10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Improved performance on re-letting voids contributes to the Community Plan and neighbourhood renewal agenda by helping to provide sustainable neighbourhoods of quality, choice and aspiration. The actions taken to improve performance include the introduction of guaranteed standard "Houseproud", local lettings standards, furnished tenancies, which alongside future choice based lettings will enhance sustainability because people will choose the area and type of property they live in.

**11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Audit Commission guidance

**Contact Name:** David Abbott, Housing Manager, Tel Ext. 2294

**Void Performance Monitoring for the Period 29.11.04– 31.12.04**

**1. The Number and Type of Voids**

- 1.1 The number of voids on 31 December 2004 increased by three from the start of the period to 220 or 0.97% of the stock. The majority of voids, (164 or 74.55%) are those currently excluded from HES 68; these include properties such as those awaiting renovation and disposal.
- 1.2 The number of voids that meet the criteria to be included within the HES 68 increased during the period to 56. This equates to 0.25% of the stock.

**2. Performance Against BVPI 68**

- 2.1 The definition for HES 68 is, the average re-let times for dwellings let in the financial year. The time is calculated from the day the authority becomes aware that a property is to become void up to the day a tenant is signed up for a property and receives the keys.
- 2.2 **The overall performance against this indicator is 16.53 days** during the period, an improvement of 0.43 days from the last period. All nine Neighbourhood Housing Offices are operating within the target of 20 days. The steps taken to improve performance during the period are highlighted in section 5.
- 2.3 The performance on allocating open access properties has continued with 4 open access properties being let in the period.
- 2.4 The current level of performance, based on the first quarter of 2004/05 comparative ALMO data would place the authority in the top quartile of All England ALMO's and move it into first place ahead of Carrick District Council and South Lakes Housing which are equal second on 17 days. Local performance at the end of the first quarter of 2004/05 was Berneslai Homes (79 days), Doncaster M.B.C. (35.86 days) and Sheffield City Council (50 days) However, it must be assumed that other authorities have also improved over the last two months. There is no direct comparable data on HES 68 for Registered Social Landlords (RSL).
- 2.5 A new Local Performance Indicator was introduced for 2003/04 - HES14. This indicator measures the average time taken to let a void from when one tenancy terminated until the next one starts as defined by dates entered onto the open house management system. This indicator excludes all those properties that are excluded from HES68. Performance based on this indicator is 12.92 days during the period. Housemark holds comparable data for this indicator but it is for 2002. They are currently conducting a benchmarking exercise to update the information. The combined top quartile performance for the 171 Local Authorities and RSL's submitting data in 2002 was anything below 25.2 days.

### **3. Terminations, Lettings and Properties Available to Let**

#### **3.1 Terminations & Lettings**

There were 125 terminations in the period of which 112 met the criteria to be included in HES 68 and 93 lettings. The cumulative figures for this year are 1314 terminations and 1348 lettings. In addition there have been 64 new tenancies created by mutual exchanges since April 2004.

#### **3.2 Property Available to Let**

The number of available to let properties at the start of the period is 26.

### **4. Performance against HES 69**

**4.1** Definition for HES 69 is the percentage of rent lost through local authority dwellings becoming vacant.

**4.2** The amount of rent income lost on voids up to 31 December 2004 has improved from 1.08% at the last report to **1.07%**. This level of performance, based on the 2001/02 comparative data, would continue to place the authority in the upper quartile for Metropolitan Authorities. This indicator has been discontinued as a National Indicator and is difficult to collect more up to date data to give a meaningful comparison. But if we were to compare performance with the 171 Local Authorities and RSL's submitting data to Housemark in 2002 it would show top quartile as being anything under 1%, the median as 1.5%. Performance Locally at the end of the first quarter of 2004/05 was Doncaster MBC (3.09), Sheffield City Council (2.82) and Berneslai Homes (3.64% May figure only).

### **5. Actions Taken to Improve Performance in the Period**

#### **HES.68**

- The Choice Based Lettings Road shows commenced in preparation for Choice Based Lettings starting in April 2005.
- The Open Access website and displays have been updated to improve accessibility. The Open Access List was also issued to 150 customers and the Tenants and Residents Associations.
- A Training program commenced for Neighbourhood staff in advance of the implementation of the Preferred Supplier Scheme on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2004.

#### **HES.69**

A cabinet report identifying a way forward on the remaining unimproved flats at the White Bear Estate at Wath was produced and submitted for cabinet approval at the meeting dated 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2004.

**6. District Performance and Issues**

- 6.1** The teams have been given a target of letting one more property than is terminated each week. The table in Appendix 1 identifies the performance of the district offices during the period.
- 6.2** Due to the local letting strategies, the impact of letting long term voids is no longer a significant issue.
- 6.3** There are still delays caused by the time taken to establish electricity supplies to some voids. This issue will be resolved by the introduction of the preferred Supplier Scheme.
- 6.4** There have been some delays around the supply of high security doors, which in some instances have taken two weeks to arrive. Steps to resolve this include the demonstration of a temporary high security door, which will fit all door sizes.
- 6.5** The return of regeneration properties at Wath has had a positive impact on performance.

**7. Sustainability**

The 'sustainability of tenancies' indicator (HES5) measures the percentage of terminating tenancies in the year that have lasted longer than 12 months. This is on the basis that tenancies which last longer than this can be considered 'successful' and that it is less likely that subsequent terminations will be due to failure to maintain tenancies on the tenants part, or provide appropriate management support on that of Housing Services. Performance during the 12 months up to the 30th September, 2004 was 95.88%. This figure does not include tenancies terminating within 12 months due to transfers, mutual exchanges and deaths. If these were included the figure would be 93.52%

## Appendix 1 – Status of Voids by Area Office as at 31/12/04

District	BVPI 68	League Position	Properties Terminated in Period	Properties Let in Period	Properties Available to Let 31/12/04	Open Access Properties Signed up in Period
Maltby	14.90 days	3rd	16	9	0	0
Dinnington	13.04 days	2nd	5	5	4	0
Wath	18.79 days	8th	9	13	1	0
Swinton	17.47 days	6th	14	6	8	4
Rawmarsh	17.18 days	5th	14	10	0	0
Going Local Pilot	18.48 days	7th	26	20	3	0
East Herringthorpe	15.04 days	4th	11	5	0	0
Town Centre	19.96 days	9th	19	15	10	0
Aston	8.99 days	1st	11	10	0	0

*NB The termination figure includes properties in the Canklow Regeneration Scheme*

By virtue of paragraph(s) 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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